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## CONTENTS

	PAGES
Muhammad Iqbāl as Seen by a European Historian of Religion <i>Annemarie Schimmel</i>	53
Iqbāl's Concepts of Love and Reason <i>Mir Valiuddin</i>	83
The Problem of Suffering in Iqbāl's Philosophy <i>M. Rafique</i>	114
Iqbāl and the Doctrine of Reincarnation <i>Abbadullah Faruqi</i>	120
On Translating Iqbāl <i>S. A. Vahid</i>	129
An Appreciation of Guru Nanak in Iqbāl's Poetry <i>Hafeez Malik</i>	146
Some Aspects of Iqbāl's Political Thought <i>Fazlur Rahman</i>	161
Socialist Ideas in the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbāl <i>Jan Marek</i>	167
Iqbāl and Mysticism <i>Syed Vahiduddin</i>	180
Three Unpublished Letters of Iqbāl <i>K. A. Nizami</i>	188
BOOK REVIEWS	
Muhammad Usman : <i>Asrār wa rumūz par ek nazar</i> (Malik Ram)	193
Bashir Ahmad Dar, ed. : <i>Anwār-i Iqbāl</i> (K. A. Nizami)	194
Khwajah Abdul Hameed Irfani : <i>Iqbāl Irānīn kī nazar meñ</i> (Malik Ram)	195
K. A. Waheed : <i>A Bibliography of Iqbāl</i> (S. A. Ali)	196

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## MUḤAMMAD IQBĀL AS SEEN BY A EUROPEAN HISTORIAN OF RELIGION

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

Muḥammad Iqbāl is such a many-sided personality that since his death the different aspects of his work have been treated again and again by Eastern and Western scholars: his poetical art, his philosophy and its background, the political importance of his ideas, his theological viewpoint, etc.

As a historian of religion, I can here concentrate on one or two points only which are, however, in my opinion the most important ones in Iqbāl's writings, and which show with sufficient lucidity that the great poet-philosopher was perfectly in tune with the great currents of thought visible in Europe during his very lifetime, though he had no access to most of the standard works on religious philosophy. I think that just the fact of this internal harmony, and the very logical development of certain ideas from both classical Muslim and modern Western thought, prove the greatness of this thinker. Let us therefore try to elucidate his main ideas of *tauḥīd* (God's unity) and of the relation of man, the vicegerent of God, to his Lord as it is expressed in prayer.

Phenomenology of religion acknowledges different types of monotheism and accepts that the confession of Divine Unity rests on different propositions. There is, for instance, the secondary monotheism in which, starting from polytheistic tendencies, theological speculation comes at last to the realization that one single reality underlies all the varied manifestations which are called deities, and the manifold gods and goddesses are only functions of the One Divine Being. This type of monotheism may also result from mystic experiences in which the seeker finds himself united with the profoundest depths of the Divine, and regards, thus, the deities only as emanations of the most high indivisible Essence. Or in prayer man chooses one out of the great number of gods and turns towards him in faith and trust as if only He is effective. Or different deities become united for purposes of cult and rite or as a result of the political unification of two peoples with different objects of worship. But this kind of monotheism, which is characteristic of the ancient religions of Egypt,



Babylon, India, etc., is always deductive; it does not make a clearcut distinction between the One and the many, and admits the existence of deities besides the Highest Being. It was only the prophetic experience in Israel (plus Christianity) and in Islam which realized the overwhelming uniqueness of God besides whom all those whom man might have adored until then were non-entities, and which cannot tolerate the worship of anyone other than that God who reveals Himself in the individual life and in history. Mystical monotheism may include all forms of reality because there is nothing existent but God and everything is a part of His life; but prophetic monotheism is always exclusive—that explains the majestic Thou shalt not . . . , and that is why there is the negation in the beginning of the Muslim creed: *lā ilāha illā Allāh*—there is no God but God.

This formula of the creed forms a favourite pattern in Iqbāl's poetical works. It becomes the symbol of the strength and power of Islam; it is indeed, with him, Islam in a nutshell. Starting from the *Asrār*, where the poet announces

*We have honour from the lā ilāh* (AK 1607),

he continues throughout his life singing the glory of these words which are

*The turning point of the world, and the end of the work of the world* (R 161),

thanks to which the heaven marches more quickly and the sun is sound on his way (alluding, here, to God in his aspect as Creator and Sustainer of the visible world).

But Iqbāl complains—addressing the ritualists and scholastic theologians—that the word *tauḥīd* has become eventually a question of mere scholastic hairsplitting (ZK 18). The meticulous disputations about the essence or the attributes of God which fill voluminous books have turned away the interest from 'practical Islam' and are, according to the poet, one of the causes of the deplorable stagnation of Islam—Muslims are no longer alive to the simple fact that bare 'unity of thinking' without 'unity of action' is immature and useless (ZK 18). Against these theoretical applications of the word Unity he protests, and calls to the living experience of Divine Unity which will beget practical Unity too:

*Whosoever knotted the lā ilāh illā Allāh into his mind,  
Has left the fetters of school and Mulla.* (AH 143)

Or, in a more satirical strain, Iqbāl says:

*The free man does not possess anything except the two words  
lā ilāh,  
But the jurist of the town is (as rich as) a Qārūn in Arabic  
Dictionaries. (BJ 50)*

Qārūn, the Biblical Korah, is famous for his wealth of which he had made no practical use: in his likeness is the learned scholar who is in possession of a large library on Arabic topics and yet does not grasp the inner meaning of the confession of faith (*cf.* also Mus. 17). But whosoever has understood the inner meaning of this confession of Divine Unity, "sun and moon will move according to his wish" (Pas 15), *i.e.*, he will attain the spiritual stage of complete freedom from everything but God and look upon the world from quite a different angle: since he is obedient to God all things will be obedient to him.

Besides its purely religious significance, the credo *lā ilāha illā Allāh* has an importance in the realms of art and also of mystic poetry which can scarcely be overestimated. In the Arabic script its alternating letters *alif* and *lām*—two letters with vertical stems—*لا إله إلا الله*—form a wonderful basic pattern for every kind of decorative ornamentation of the formula which is, of course, found wherever Muslims have reached, and in both minor arts and architectural inscriptions these weighty words have been so intricately and bewilderingly interlaced to make them ornate that an uninitiated would scarcely imagine that the essence of Muslim faith is concealed behind them. On the other hand, the rhythmical wording of the formula has made it the typical *dhikr* of mystic circles which can be repeated hundreds of times, either in solitude or in congregation, often accompanied with breath control or rhythmical movement.

The contrast between the two parts of the sentence 'There is no God—but God' has, from early times, often attracted speculative minds who discovered not only a strictly dogmatic meaning but also a deeper mystical truth in the confrontation of the *lā* and the *illā*. The great Persian mystics like Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār have made use of these contrast-pairs, and Maulānā Rūmī apologizes in one line for his way of using symbols and allusions reflecting to the creed:

*When I say 'lip' then I intend the lip of the sea—  
When I say 'No' the intention is 'but'. (Maḥnavī I : 1759)*

And al-Jili writes a variation of the creed in his verse:

*When they say No, I say But her beauty;  
When they say But, I say Her loveliness is radiant!*

Indian Islam inherited this poetical and mystical use of the formula from its Persian masters. Under Aurangzeb, the heretic Jewish convert to Islam, and a bold poet, Sarmad, was accused of reciting only the first part of the creed, *lā ilāh*; he replied that he would be a sheer hypocrite if he pronounced the positive as long as he had not freed himself from the state of negation.

Iqbāl is an advocate not of the mystical but of the prophetic No of which Söderblom, the Swedish theologian, has said in his book *The Living God*:

But No is also needed. Without No there will be no proper Yes. For then all that denies and destroys, degrades and delays what is right and good would be allowed to remain unattacked and unabolished. That is why a No is necessary in the moral warfare of the individual, in the evolution of religion and in the history of the race.

This is the situation in which Iqbāl felt himself embedded:  
*To say No in front of everything besides God is life,  
From this strife creation is made fresh. (Pas 19)*

It is (as he says in the same poem which can be called the most lucid exposition of the theory of *lā* and *illā*) 'the sword of NO' which makes the faithful who wield it ruler of the world (Pas 22), a sword, with which the Prophet takes the blood off the veins of the idle whereas the word 'But God'

*Written on the desert became the title-line of our salvation.*  
(R 128, cf. AK 1645 f.)

It is the greatest fault of the men of the present age that they do no longer use this dagger of *lā* (Pas 27) which would enable them to resist the temptations of modern civilization, with its numerous idols. This negation is, of course, only the first stage:

*In the world the beginning is from the word No,  
This is the first station of the man of God. (Pas 19)*

Life does not rest in this place, since creation runs towards the But God (Pas 22). Yet negation is the condition of true life:

*Both of them are the destiny of the created world,  
Movement is born from negation, quietude from affirmation.*  
(Pas 19)



The same idea was expressed by 'Aṭṭār eight centuries ago admonishing the faithful:

*Become lā if thou art going upwards (bālā),  
For only through lā one can move.*

It is the dialectical tension of negation and affirmation of the negative and the positive pole that enables life to subsist in every grade, from the basic electric and magnetic current to the highest stages of spirituality.

But who is this God whose unity is to be confessed? How is He to be thought though thoughts cannot reach Him? The later definitions of the catechism teach the pupils that one is obliged to know what is necessary, what is impossible, and what is possible regarding God our Lord . . . and inform him about the 20 attributes, one of them being essential (His existence), five exclusive (like His unity); seven are called accident-attributes (like His power, His hearing), and seven accidental attributes (like His being hearing etc.). These definitions have framed God into an exactly limited system of rational thought, and have done the same with all parts of the Muslim Creed. But this rational argumentation is rather far from the lively descriptions the *Qur'ān* itself gives of God the Creator whose grandeur is attested to by everything created, from the atom to the movement of stars, who is the Judge on the Doomsday, the Merciful to those who repent. From whatever angle we may approach God, He remains a most active and living Being. It is God who has put signs in the world, on earth and in the heavens with the purpose that man may understand who has created him and has breathed His breath into his form of dust, and who has ordered that everything created should obey His commandments and worship Him, who has sent Prophets to all peoples for warning and advising them, and who will summon once more all created beings before His throne to judge them according to their deeds. Modern research has tried to prove that the prevalent attribute of the *Qur'ānic* God is His justice; but the theological difficulty is always the tension between absolute justice and absolute power. In the course of time, the living God of the *Qur'ānic* revelation has become the rationally described God of the catechism; philosophy and neoplatonic thought had helped in transmuting the active Semitic God of early Islam into a *prima causa*, a *motor immobilis*, or a merely neutral essence, so that some foreign observers have been misled to the conclusion that Islam is a deistic system.

Iqbāl goes back behind the rationalistic commentaries and the mystic speculations to the original *Qurʾānic* teachings and describes God first and last as an Ego: His name Allāh, as He calls Himself in the *Qurʾān*, manifests His personal character (L 72), and the *Sūra* 112, the short confession of God's unity which is of paramount importance for Islamic thought, theology and spiritual life, is again a proof of God's being an Ego. In the introduction to the *Secrets of the Self*, the first work where Iqbāl has laid down his philosophy of the Self, he writes:

God Himself is an individual, He is the most unique individual.

It is astonishing that R.A. Nicholson has written in his fine studies on the 'Idea of Personality in Sufism' which were published only shortly after he himself had translated Iqbāl's *Secrets of the Self* into English, that

we must define, at least in general terms, what we mean when we ascribe personality to God—a question of prime importance for Christians, but on which Moslem theologians have never asked themselves, much less attempted to answer. I would remark, in the first place, that the expression "Divine Personality" cannot be translated adequately into any Mohammadan language . . . .

Iqbāl has, however, tried to answer the question, and more than that, he has built his whole system upon this very idea that God is the most perfect personality which he was to prove from the *Qurʾān*.

The problem before Iqbāl is this: How can the Divine Ego, this "stupendously rich reality" (F. von Hügel) which cannot be described adequately by human words, who is *Ghanī*, the most rich who has no need—how can this infinite and overwhelming Being be compatible with personality? Iqbāl has been accused of having developed an illogical concept of an 'infinite personality' since these two conceptions are contradictory and exclusive. It is of interest to compare his views in this respect with that of modern European thinkers who have, as he had, tried to reevaluate the God of the prophetic (i.e., for them Christian) experience. Friedrich von Hügel, the profound English Catholic thinker, writes:

Indeed we can safely hold with Lotze not only that Personality is compatible with Infinitude, but that the personality of all finite beings can be shown to be imperfect precisely because of their finitude and hence that 'Perfect Personality' is compatible only with the conception of an Infinite Being; finite beings can only achieve an approximation to it.

Besides the name Allāh, and the *Sūra* 112, Iqbāl has found another proof of God's Egohood in the *Qur'ānic* assertion "Call upon Me, and I will answer"—that means the experience of prayer becomes the proof of God's personality. Iqbāl shares here the view of one of the leading philosophers of modern Germany, Heinrich Scholz (*d.* 1951), who writes:

It belongs to the character of the Divine that it is given as a Thou. Thus the content of the religious consciousness of God can never be the same entity that metaphysics calls 'the Absolute'. For it is clearly an absurdity to contact the Absolute in the form of a Thou, indeed even to come into touch at all.

Contact with the Absolute, as sought by many of the most influential mystics, is only possible on quite other levels of consciousness and ultimately involves a passing away from all qualities of thought and from life in the normal sense of the word. That is also the conviction of C. C. J. Webb whom R. A. Nicholson quotes in his above-mentioned book:

Only so far as personal relations are allowed to exist between the worshipper and his God, can that God properly be described as personal . . . .

Paul Tillich, too, has stated the importance of

a God with whom I have a person-to-person encounter. He is the subject of all the symbolic statements in which I express my ultimate concern.

The emphasis Iqbāl laid on the personality of God—which, of course, transcends every imaginable personality—is one of his greatest contributions to the reconstruction of Islamic thought, and is completely in tune with the contemporary interest which concentrates again on the Divine personality and can be marked not only in Christian theology and science of religion, but also in other religions, like Sikhism (according to the interpretation given by Dr Mohan Singh).

Classical Islamic mysticism had held that real personality belongs to God alone, that 'nobody can say I but God'. In Iqbāl's philosophy and theology, however, there are other egos besides God, or rather inside the all-embracing Divine Ego. The world itself is conceived as an Ego, and everything created is nothing but an Ego; the unimaginable varieties of them are sustained by that comprehensive Divine Ego who holds them in His own Being—not in His imagination. The existence of those numberless egos on different stages of development—from atom to man—whose existence is not obliterated

by the greatest Ego, seems to be self-contradictory, for either the smaller egos have no existence of their own but are organic parts of the Greatest Ego, or they exist in a sphere outside that Ego and cannot come into living and life-giving contact with Him. We may guess that Iqbāl's idea of the relation between the Ultimate Ego and the created egos is something similar to Rudolf Eucken's notion that

the singular existences must as a matter of course belong to a universal personal life in order to be or to be able to become that what the striving of their nature aims at; the particular beings will get a character of personality only from a universal personality-life.

One has seen in Iqbāl's thought the influence of the spiritual pluralism of J. Ward—to whom he refers also as a parallel to the Ash'arite concept of world and God (L 72)—but the affinity to R. Eucken, whose *Collected Essays* were found in the Thinker's Library, is as great, and is visible in many other concerns too.

Iqbāl's idea that God is both immanent and transcendent—immanent as the nature of the self (*cf.* L 62, 73) but transcendent as not being within the grasps of our experience—can be again illustrated by a statement of von Hügel:

But there is nothing intrinsically unreasonable in thinking of ultimate Cause, Ground and End of the world as certainly not less than, as somehow not all unlike, what we know our own self-consciousness, mind, feeling and will to be, provided we keep the sense that God is certainly not just One Object amongst other objects, or even simply one Subject amongst other subjects, He is not only more perfect than, but distinct and different from, them all . . .

God, the ultimate Ego, takes in Himself the infinite fullness of life, but His

infinity is intensive, not extensive. It involves an infinite series, but is not that series. (L 64)

The Divine Personality as absolute power who is able to create spontaneously and whose life is creativeness, realizing His infinite energies in nature and history, that is the God of the prophetic religion, and also the God whom the vitalist philosophers had postulated—

for the comprehension of Reality, Being, under the symbol of purpose, creation, realization, insistence, progress, power, energy, life, has its origin in prophetic teaching,

says N. Söderblom with regard to Bergson's "Semitic" philosophy which has, again, influenced Iqbāl's thought.

## IQBĀL AS SEEN BY A EUROPEAN HISTORIAN OF RELIGION

The proposition that God is conceived as an Ego whose Egohood is realized in full in man's contact with Him in prayer leads to the logical conclusion of man's egohood. As Tillich has pointed out:

Man becomes man in personal encounters. Only by meeting a thou does man realize that he is an ego.

This self-realization of the human ego is the central theme of Iqbāl's philosophy and theology not only in the first *mathnawī* which bears the significant title *The Secrets of the Self* but during his whole life. The human ego may be understood as

higher than everything you see (ZA GR 327; cf. the whole question VI)

and may be compared, to a certain extent, to Eucken's concept of the Self which is

in one meaning the proposition, in the other one the perfection of striving, there as self-being, here as self-becoming, there as a fact, here as a task.

That means, the Self is both existent and still to be perfected, it is a given thing and yet a task before man.

Man, not only from the biological but from the spiritual point of view as well, is the result of immense periods of development (J. v. 23). He should not—as the evolutionists did—inquire too much about the previous states of his biological life but rather ponder upon his future:

*Why should I ask the wise men: Whence is my beginning?  
I am busy with the thought: What will be my end?* (BJ 81).

That is Iqbāl's reply to the pessimism he saw in the Western world which seemed to be robbed of faith in man's future, whereas he regarded the idea of evolution that he witnessed in classical Islam as a most effective means of giving life a new direction (L 186); he underlines this evolutionary concept by inserting the famous verses from Maulānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī* which point to the growing possibilities which extend from stone to heavenly beings—lines that have even been read by other commentators as an indication of transmigration of souls.

For Iqbāl, there is no doubt that

throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of Egohood till it reaches its perfection in man, (L 72)



that the *d̥haug-i numūd*, the joy of manifestation (BJ 79), the wish of becoming more and more individual, is the leading force in life. It is the same idea which has been explained by R. Pannwitz in many of his recent philosophical books (and it is interesting to note that both the German and the Sub-Himalayan Muslim philosopher have been influenced to a certain extent by some Nietzschean concepts) :

As in every life the rising tendency is preponderating—for otherwise there would be no life at all—so every development aspires to a higher step, and on the highest rank to the greatest consciousness, individuation, and freedom.

Man constitutes the highest rank in his world because he contains the greatest possible number of ranks in his being, and is, as such, "the first and last cosmic constant," says Pannwitz, whilst the lower potencies—that which Nietzsche had called so acutely "the matter which has learned nothing"—are always in danger of being destroyed (Iqbāl would remind here the reader of the example of the drop which has not consolidated its Self and is therefore swallowed by somebody else) and must start again and again to rise gradually on the gamut of individuation; man differs from this matter which forms simply a colony of egos of a lower order, thanks to his striving for perfection.

"Only the individual can reach perfection," avers R. Pannwitz who has drawn as indefatigably as Iqbāl the attention of the modern age to the fact that the entelechy is the real meaning of life: translated into Iqbāl's poetry that would correspond to the 'Address to the New Moon' :

*Look upon thyself and do not be anxious because of thy  
void shirt,  
For in thy breast a full moon is concealed.* (PM 96)

Man is called to be the *khalīfat Allāh*, created in God's image, like Him an undivisible unity (there is no dualism of soul and body), like Him a creator, called to become endowed with the highest qualities as the Prophet had said : "*Takhallaqū bi-akhlāq Allāh.*"

The most famous expression of man's work as cooperator with God, and as Creator of the sketchy world, is found in the dialogue between man and God in the *Payām-i mashriq*, where man boasts:

*Thou didst create night and I made the lamp,  
Thou didst create clay and I made the cup,*

## IQBĀL AS SEEN BY A EUROPEAN HISTORIAN OF RELIGION

*Thou didst create the deserts, mountains and forests,  
I produced the orchards, gardens and groves,  
It is I who turn stone into a mirror,  
And it is I who turn poison into an antidote!* (PM 132)

Man has to give the potentially existing universe its shape and to form out of the given raw-material the best possible world. Thus, creating always new values as a co-worker with God, man is

not a superman but more humble than ever, devoted to what is not only he himself but the God in him and he himself as His legate and minister.

This Pannwitzian formulation expresses exactly Iqbāl's ideal man. Iqbāl has repeated this message of man's work and worth in the present age because his correlative seemed to have forgotten the *Qur'ānic* phrase of man's destination as divine vicegerent on earth which implies further that this world is not given as property to him but that he is to take it only as a trust from God to Whom he has to give it back at the moment of his death (*cf.* J. Mars-sphere). This feeling of being only the legate and trustee, not owner, of the created world should prevent the faithful from transgressions in the political and social realm, and be an antidote against both nationalism, landlordism, and imperialism.

This idea of the Perfect Man (derived from Islamic *ṣūfism* more than from Nietzsche's Superman who replaces a God "Who has died") is, in Iqbāl's social philosophy, also applied to the Muslim nation.

Iqbāl thinks that in this ideal nation which is organized according to the eternal rules of the *Qur'ān*, the individual proper will have space enough for unfolding its powers as widely as possible and realize the *Qur'ānic* order to be God's vicegerent, because in this community the most pious one will be dearest to God (*Sūra* 49:13, R. 120). Both individual and nation are called to this vicegerency, and it is therefore surprising only to those who are not acquainted with Iqbāl's way of arguing that he applies Divine qualities to the wakeful nation which is both the realization of the mystical experience uttered by Ḥallāj: *Anā'l-ḥaqq*, I am the creative truth (AH 98), and of the Throne-verse, "No slumber takes Him nor sleep." (*Sūra* 2:256)

*Among the nations that one is of high rank  
Which is the Imam of the two worlds—*

*It does not abstain from its creative work,  
For 'sleep and slumber' are forbidden to it. (AH 98)*

The ideal individual and the ideal nation are involved every moment in a new work, like God who unfolds fresh creative energies without interruption.

Thus the essential word of Muslim creed—that God is One, who is interpreted as the greatest personality with intensively infinite possibilities of creation—forms likewise the basis of Iqbāl's representation of man as real personality, endowed with possibilities for development, the highest being in the pyramid of creatures, nearest to God and yet most endangered by his growing individualization, but formed, in any case, "after the form of God", and also of his picture of the ideal Muslim nation in which Divine vicegerency and harmonious development of the faculties of the individual in accordance with the requirements of the community are warranted through a fresh interpretation of the Divine Law, thanks not to bookish learning but to the contact of the faithful with the Living God and their daily experience of His presence, which makes them "say No to all idolatry and polytheism and let the one true God alone be the ruler in the hearts and lives of men."

The cooperation between man—and also the nation which is united in worship—and God finds its expression in prayer. The old sentence *lex credendi lex orandi* holds true also in Islam where the manifold sides of religious life are reflected in the bewildering variety of devotional types, from the merely magical use of certain formulas up to the summits of mystical union with God or the creative dialogue between man and his Lord.

On a smaller scale, the maxim holds good also for Iqbāl, in whose work the mystery of prayer is always emphasized: one of the most touching scenes of the *Jāvidnāmah* is the moment, when the poet and his spiritual guide Rūmī perform their prayer behind the great reformer, Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, and the Turkish Prince Sa'īd Ḥalīm Pāshā.

We know from his old servant that Iqbāl was keen on morning prayer, that after prayer he used to read the *Qur'ān*, and that he did not neglect the *tahajjud* prayers at night.

How great an importance he attributed to prayer and intercession can be appreciated from a pathetic letter to Sir Kishan Prasad,

the Hindu Prime Minister of Hyderabad, to whom he wrote in 1918, that, it being the sacred month of Ramadan

I shall pray after the morning prayer for you . . . I, the blackfaced slave, sometimes get up for *tahajjud* prayer and sometimes spend the whole night awake. And by the precious grace of God I shall pray for you either before or after *tahajjud*, for at that time a special delight is experienced in the Divine worship—how should it be astonishing if prayer be heard at that time. (M II 193)

Since Iqbāl saw in prayer an act not only of obedience but of love which gives man highest spiritual direction, it can be appreciated why, in the *Jawāb-i shikwah*,<sup>1</sup> the Muslim community is blamed because they have forsaken this supreme bliss, and are unmindful of its importance for life:

*Very heavy in your spirits weighs the charge of morning prayer.  
You would rather love to sleep than rise up to worship Me.*

It is small wonder that some of Iqbāl's best poems are either written as lyrical prayers, or inspired by the experience of prayer: it is agreed that one of his masterpieces is the great ode on the mosque of Cordova where he had performed his prayer, and had lived a spiritual upheaval greater than he had experienced elsewhere, and which is echoed in this poem. (BJ 130 ff)

Ritual prayer is in Iqbāl's interpretation a means to freedom—  
*It came at afternoon—the call for prayer  
Which purifies the faithful from the directions (i.e. from this  
world)*

(Mus 15, description of a prayer led by King Nādir of Afghanistan).

The philosophical explanation of the same fact is contained, already some years earlier, in his Lectures (L 109):

The timing of the daily prayer which according to the *Qur'ān* restores self-possession to the Ego by bringing it to closer contact with the ultimate source of life and freedom, is intended to save the Ego from the mechanizing effect of sleep and business. Prayer in Islam is the Ego's escape from mechanism to freedom.

Daily prayers are thus the most important prescription of the *Qur'ān* for the believers, and are their most precious property. They are both jewel and weapon for the Muslim:

*The profession of faith is the shell, and prayer is the pearl  
within it.*

<sup>1</sup> Arabic *shakwa*, commonly pronounced *shikwah* in Iran and India.

*The Muslim's heart deems prayer a lesser pilgrimage.  
In the Muslim's hand prayer is like a dagger,  
Killing sins, and frowardness and wrong. (AK 874 ff)*

Of the perfect Muslim, one can say:

*The tremendum of Divine Grandeur is in his standing upright,  
And the beauty of human worship is in his prostration. (AH 20)*

Even the blue sky performs its circumambulation around the free man who prostrates in this sublime way (Pas 50) in which the contact with the Divine has been established and the fate of man is changed (Pas 49), whereas the tasteless and loveless prostration is just like a blur on God's purity (AH 250).

In spite of the paramount importance which Iqbāl attributes to the prescribed prayers, he knows that his wishes, his loving and longing words, will break their fixed forms.

*Wherever I bow my head into the dust, roses rise—  
My asking will not find room in two rak'as of prayer!  
(PM 177)*

It surely will not. For Iqbāl, the whole life must be sublimated to prayer since the greatest prerogative of man is his searching, his ardent pilgrimage towards God. He would not like to be God—

*This being God must be a headache—  
But this being servant, I swear, that is not headache but  
heartache! (BJ 30).*

This positive evaluation of man's situation as being endowed with the faculty of expressing his longing for God in prayers has guided Iqbāl's whole work.

There are poetical prayers of exceeding beauty, especially in the *Zabūr-i 'ajam*, in which Iqbāl praises the Divine power and fascinating grace in profound verses and tries, as the classical poets had done, to describe the mysterious relation of God and man in rich symbols:

*Thou comest to my bosom, in my autumn spring shall glow.  
(ZA I 55)*

*Thine is the hawk upon the wing  
And Thine the thrush sweet-carolling,*



## IQBĀL AS SEEN BY A EUROPEAN HISTORIAN OF RELIGION

*Thine is the light and joy of life,  
And Thine its fire and baneful strife. (ZA I 29)*

*Thou assey of the asseyless,  
Ease of the reposeless mind,  
Cure of the afflicted spirit,  
Save too rare Thou art to find! (ZA I 46)*

and with a childlike simplicity he says:

*The raw copper which I have, I make it elixir by love—  
For tomorrow when I come into Thy presence Thou wilt ask  
for a gift from me. (ZA I 39)*

Presumably the best, the most personal and I dare say the most typical of Iqbāl's poems are these prayers. A careful analysis of these prayer-poems would suffice even for the reconstruction of his main religious ideas. In his *Lectures*, too, this problem forms the cornerstone in Chapter III, 'The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer', where he writes:

... The quest after a nameless nothing, as disclosed in neo-Platonic mysticism—be it Christian or Muslim—cannot satisfy the modern mind which, with its habits of concrete thinking, demands a concrete living experience of God. And the history of the race shows that the attitude of the mind embodied in the act of worship is a condition for such an experience. In fact, prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the observer of Nature . . . (L 89 ff)

From the experience of prayer, Iqbāl will prove the fact that God is an Ego, and his proof of God's Egohood is taken—as we have already mentioned—from the *Qur'anic* verse, "Call upon Me and I shall answer you" (*Sūra* 40:62) : only an Ego can address another Ego, and in prayer man both realizes God as the great Thou and himself as a person who is able to speak and to be spoken to. Man who is yearning not as much for perfection as for a direct contact with the Ultimate Reality, tries to pray, asks for a companion, a being to whom he can disclose these inmost mysteries of his heart:

*Prayer is an expression of man's inner yearning in the awful  
silence of the Universe. (L 92)*

In many of his poems, Iqbāl has expressed what as philosopher he had explained by means of psychology. The longing for the

presence of God is one of his favourite subjects and brings him even to the assertion that

*From longing I sometimes cut his idol from the stone. (ZA  
GR 221)*

To live without this vision, is worse than death:

*Either open this veil of mysteries,  
Or take away this soul that has no vision! (J 34)  
Only this contact with God grants real life:  
Who knows the end of the world, the judgement?  
As for me, when Thou lookest once, that is resurrection!*

Friedrich Heiler has, in his great book on Prayer, distinguished between the 'prophetic' and the 'mystical' as recognizable and sharply contrasted types of religious experience. The goal of mystic prayer, after ascetic preliminaries, is the preparation of the soul for full union with God, the meditation of God's transcendent beauty and the contemplation of His unchanging eternity. A wide variety of religious truths may be the themes of the mystical regulation of meditation; but mystical prayer ends at the moment when union with God is attained, when there remains nothing but the "clear darkness", and the inexhaustible Godhead, a Godhead which can be described either as a Neutrum, as spiritualized force, beyond the personal God, or as the essence of eternal beauty, the eternally Beloved whose decrees are gladly and ungrudgingly accepted.

In prophetic religion, however, God is active, creative personality, the Living God, to Whom men dare come, as they might to a king or a father, with all the tale of their griefs and sorrows. The last goal in the prayer of the prophetic type is not quietude, calmness and detachment of worldly affairs but the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. Man's aim is not to be united with God but to unite his will with the Divine will, and work according to His laws.

There is no doubt that Iqbāl, in his whole personality, is an excellent exponent of this prophetic type of religion. The poet who had written in the *Asrār* (v. 1629)

*Give me the sleepless eye and the passionate heart—*

has never ceased asking God for new activities; he wants that God  
*may quicken the thousand years old dust by my call (ZA I 4),*

that he, the Living Stream, may be granted the deserts and mountains as his proper place so that he can spread out (ZA p. 4).

The Presence of God is, according to Iqbāl,  
*a growth undiminishing.* (J. 791)

And when man has reached the climax of prayer, staying eye to eye, brow to brow with the Greatest Ego, he experiences the infinite possibilities in God, and may choose one of them, even asking from God the altering of His will and to grant him a new life, a new destination.

From this keen conviction a question arises that has interested the whole world of Islam (as of other religions) since the beginning of theological thinking and mystical feeling. The question is whether prayer is compatible with the everlasting decree of God, and, if we assume that prayer is allowed—is it efficient? In the *Qurʾān*, as is well known, the ideas of free will and responsibility and of predestination stand side by side. Among the *sūfīs*, stern ascetics like ʿAbdal-lāh ibn Mubārak and al-Wāsiṭī, boasted of having never asked God for anything; and when Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, one of the most outstanding quietists among the earliest generations of Muslim mystics, came into a tempest and his friends asked him urgently to pray for the salvation of the crew, he answered, “This is not the time for praying, this is the moment of surrender.” Even among rationalist Muslim modernists there are men who do not attribute any positive value to prayer in the sense of asking a change in the imminent, among them the Indian reformer Sayyid Aḥmad Khan.

But most of the theologians and mystics clung to the Divine promise, “Call upon Me, and I will answer you.” A prophetic tradition related by Tirmidhī (*qadar*, 6) teaches that “nothing wards off the decree but prayer.” The greatest Muslim thinkers, and saints, like Ghazzālī and ʿAbd al-Qādir Gilānī, were sure that prayer, too, was preordained and belonged to the *qadar*, and that it is not forbidden to use the shield of prayer against the arrows of evil. The famous Persian saint Kāzīrūnī was asked: “When food and sustenance are provided, why does prayer exist, and why do we ask?” And he answered: “In order to show clearly the greatness and high rank of the believer, as God has said: ‘If I give thee without being asked by thee, the perfection of thy honour would not be revealed! And, therefore, I have ordained prayer, so that thou shalt call to Me and I shall

answer thy calling." The idea that God tests man because He longs for hearing his voice in prayer is found as early as in Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-luma'* (p. 136), and has been framed in a nice story in Maulānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī* (VI 4217 ff). In all religions, the greatest leaders of the prophetic type have been sure that prayer can change the world, can alter the decrees of God. Luther expressed this idea thus:

After prayer, God altereth His decree and will, what you may remember well. And here, one must not discuss the secret and veiled change of the Divine Will, but learn it, as Psalm CXIX enjoins us: He also will hear their cry, and will help them. He will leave His will and do their will. That is a Christian's greatest dignity and his priesthood that he can come with his prayer into God's presence and prevail upon God.

Notwithstanding this admission of the fact that God's will may change indeed, thanks to the prayer of the faithful, it is agreed that even a greater marvel than the possible change of God's will is the psychological effect of prayer. This change of consciousness, which follows real prayer, is its fulfilment:

*If by thy prayer the wide space cannot be changed,  
Perhaps it is possible that thou wilt be changed.  
And if in thy self a revolution takes place—  
Then it is small wonder when the world changes.* (ZK 167)

With the allusion to the *Qur'ānic* verse, "Verily God will not change the condition of men, unless they change what is in themselves" (*Sūra* 13:12) which is a keyword of Iqbāl's thought, the poet stresses the mysterious effects of true prayer as the centre of life.

The extreme nearness to God that man feels in this last experience of prayer leads him sometimes to such a boldness of expression that it comes close to impiety. Iqbāl, thus, ventures to utter harsh words that would be unthinkable in the mouth of a contemplating lover, intoxicated by the cup of Eternal Beauty. But this boldness and even harshness is a fact often to be found in very religious people. Even a mystical leader like Junaid al-Baghdādī (d. 910) is related to have said: "When love becomes right, the conditions of fine education no longer apply." Ḥaṭṭār and Rūmī also tell many stories of people who spoke angrily, even offensively, and without any respect, to God. Turkish mystical poets often criticize God's decrees in their verses, and even today Turkish popular piety knows the saint who has reached the level of *nāz*, coquetry, and can scold God without being punished.

As for Iqbāl, the revolutionary poetical prayers that he sometimes utters are expressions of his pride of being a human being and, thus, to live on the highest level nature affords. As a strong individuality, he can work, and by his own work better nature, which is, after the first act of creation, still incomplete, and needs man for its perfection, as Iqbāl has described it in the Prologue in Heaven in *Jāvidnāmah*, or in the daring Dialogue between God and Man (PM 132).

The Perfect Man, the faithful who talks freely to God, may ask God in the same moment—in a sudden attack on a quietistic conception of God Who is only the Beloved but not the lover—

*What hast Thou to do in this world of pain and longing?*

*Doest Thou have my fire or my restlessness? (ZA I 6)*

and can yet invite Him to come into his loving embrace:

*Rest for a moment in my lap*

*From the labour and trouble of this being God! (ZA I 10)*

This last expression leads to the question of the mutual relation between Man and God as expressed in the experience of prayer. In the closing scene of *Jāvidnāmah*, when the poet is standing in God's overwhelming presence, he asks:

*Life is everywhere searching and seeking—*

*This delicate question has not yet been solved : am I the prey  
or is He? (JA 1793)*

an idea to which he had alluded some years ago:

*We are gone astray from God,*

*He is seeking upon the road,*

*For like us, He is need entire*

*And the prisoner of desire. (ZA II 29)*

The mutual attraction of man and God, theologically culminating in the idea of the *oratio infusa*, has been felt by all those who have pondered over the problem of prayer, and the problem of grace. Just as the Bible tells that God addressed man first by calling him "Adam, where art thou?" and gave him courage to answer, so the *Qur'ān* avers that, before the creation, God spoke to the still uncreated human race: "Am I not your Lord?" to which the generations to come answered, "Yes, we attest it" (*Sūra* 7 : 171). These verses point to the fact that the weak creature cannot approach the presence



of the Most Holy if he is not called. This mystery, that God seeks man first, has often been expressed in mysticism both Eastern and Western, perhaps in the simplest words by the Persian *ṣūfī* *Kharrāqānī* who beheld one night God the Almighty in his dreams, and, overflowing with love and joy, cried out: "O my God, for sixty years have I hoped to win Thy love, and lived in longing for Thee!" And the Lord answered: "Thou hast sought Me sixty years? And We have loved thee from the beginning of the world!"

The finest example of the quest of God for man in European literature, that of Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, is anticipated by Niffarī, an 'Irāqī mystic of the middle of the 10th century. And how often do we find the idea that God Himself gives prayer, that He, as Rūmī has told us again and again, "causes prayer to grow in us like roses grow from the dust," so that in each "O Lord" of the slave there are a hundred "I am at your service" from God's side; that not only the thirsty are seeking water but also water is seeking the thirsty.

In a *ḥadīth-i qudsī*, God is related to have promised, "When my slave comes nearer to me a span, I will approach him a yard, and when he approaches one yard, I will approach him one fathom; when he comes walking I come running."

That is just what Muḥammad Iqbāl wants to indicate: the deepest mystery of prayer is the mutual approach of man and God.

For the prophetic-minded, the fruit of this mutual approach in prayer will be seen in action—"prayer naturally, spontaneously, issues in action" (Dean Inge). But on the other hand, it is also action that leads man to prayer. The search for truth and knowledge may show itself not only in the accustomed forms of prayer but also in daily life, in scientific explorations and philosophical researches. That is why Iqbāl holds that

... prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the observer of nature. The scientific observation of nature keeps us in close touch with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it . . .

And he continues:

The truth is, that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer. (L 91)

For scientific research may bring man to a point where he feels

the mystery of Creation, where eventually his ardent quest for knowledge approaches adoration. That is the point on which Iqbāl's interest is concentrated: the point where 'ishq, the ardour of love, and 'ilm, the ardour of science, may be united, and thus help mankind to reach a higher spiritual level. Since Iqbāl includes all kinds of searching in his conception of prayer, it is not astonishing to find the statement that

... in great action alone the self of man becomes united with God without losing his own identity, and transcends the limits of time and space. Action is the highest form of contemplation.

Prayer is the highest form of action, action the highest form of prayer—they complete each other as, to quote Dean Inge once more, "the spiral stair by which man may ascend to heaven." Thus we can summarize Iqbāl's view, too. He has expressed this paradox in a key-passage of his *Lectures*:

... Prayer ... is a unique process of discovery whereby the searching Ego affirms itself in the very moment of self-negation and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the Universe. (L 92)

Iqbāl has always seen in prayer, according to the Prophetic tradition, an ascension, a *mi'raj* in which the loving soul breaks the *zunnār*, the Magic Girdle, of created time, and realizes the word of the Messenger of God, "I have a time with God" (*lī ma'a Allāh waqt*). He finds himself united with the infinite in midst of finiteness, and eternal in every moment; it is "the hour without hours," which Maulānā Rūmī has described in beautiful verses (*Mathnawī* III 2072). This communion with the living source of Time and Eternity makes man himself eternal; he is no longer subject to outward serial time but, as seven centuries ago, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ* had said:

*Though thy intoxication will have but the life of a moment  
Thou wilt regard time as a slave to thy command.*

He then sees everything *sub specie aeternitatis*, after having witnessed the 'new birth' (J 142 ff) and the spiritual resurrection which is the content of this conscious participation of the Fullness of Divine life. So, he is no longer the vehicle of the day, but the rider of time (ZK 36), and since, according to Iqbāl,

it is time as an organic whole that the Qur'ān describes as *Taqdīr* or the destiny, (L 49)

man can even deal freely with destiny, can use the possibilities which are hidden in God where there is no net of causal consequence. (L 49)

The poetical connexion between Iqbāl's concept of eternal growing and development as well as the never-ending craving for higher spiritual stages and closer connexion with the Divine life on the one hand, and his philosophy of time on the other, is given in the old motive of the Road, the path, and, perfectly true to the tradition of Islamic mysticism, in the motif of Ascension or Heavenly journey. It is not an accident that he has expressed his deepest thoughts in the *Jāvidnāmah*, where all the divergent lines of his thought are brought into one perfect whole.

This symbolization of man's craving for Divine Presence as a journey, a way, is as old as mankind. Evelyn Underhill has devoted a special paragraph to the mystical symbolism in which she contrasts the symbol of love, and that of alchemy—the sublimation of the copper of the human soul into pure spiritual gold—with that of the journey which has been preferred by all those mystics and poets who lay stress on the dynamic character of religious life. The poets of the Hebrew Psalms have expressed their longing for the Holy centre of their religion, for Jerusalem, which has been transformed later on into the symbol of Divine Presence, the everlasting goal of Pilgrim's Progress, who lives in

the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road,

or for Mount Carmel where the difficult steps of renunciation, meditation, and prayer lead. This pilgrimage towards the goal never reached has found its most famous expression in Islamic literature in the works of Farid al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, whose *Manṭiq al-tair*, the journey of the thirty birds through the seven valleys unto Divine Union, has become, since long, a favourite model in the phenomenology of religions, especially because of its combination of the ancient soul-bird-motif with that of the journey. 'Aṭṭār's *Muṣibatnāmah*, however, which has been examined by H. Ritter in his monumental work *Das Meer der Seele*, is the perfect expression of this eternal journey of which everything created partakes: stars and streets and man and animal are moved only by the search for God.

'Aṭṭār's ideas have been taken over by Maulānā Rūmī who has praised in hymnical verses the miraculous effects of this spiritual way—

*If a tree would move with foot and wing,  
It would not feel the blows of the axe nor the wound of the  
saw.*

The Persian epics which deal with the tragical figure of Majnūn in search of his beloved Lailā, and, in India herself, the story of Sasui wandering through the mountains, seeking her lost beloved—a story which culminates in the words

*Let me run, let me run, and never find . . . —*

and numberless other examples show how familiar the Islamic world was with this motif eternal journey which is a means, and the single one, for unceasing spiritual development—not in vain was the mystical order called *ṭarīqa*, the Path.

For Iqbāl, with this strong vitalistic tendency, the unceasing movement was the proper symbol: therefore his *nom de plume* *Zindahrūd*, Living Stream, in the *Jāvidnāmah*, therefore the title *Bell of the Caravan* for his first collection of Urdu poetry.

I would even assert that the most beautiful verses in Iqbāl's poetry are those in which he sings the delight of movement:

*I do not sit in the nest because of the joy of flight—  
Sometimes I am on the rose-twig, sometimes on the bank of  
the canal. (PM 174)*

This idea of eternal wandering makes him say that

*the station is nothing but a milestone of the road. (Lalah 62)*

and that even

*the crooked road is better than the station. (Lalah 72)*

He would surely have agreed with Blake: "Expect poison from the standing water." For every moment of standstill means a drawback, and since man has to unfold his inner possibilities through untiring activity (the word taken in the widest possible meaning), Iqbāl says in a Heraclitean strain

*Journey is reality, stillness only symbolic,  
The secret of life is nothing but taste of flight, (BJ 171)*

and he avers, taunting the traditionist:

*They have made me acquainted with the joy of flight—  
Thou seekest a nest in the space of the garden. (ZA II 4)*

Behind every station new surprises, new possibilities are open (BJ 70), just as the human heart with its unfathomable depth cannot

be explored at all (ZA GR 231). Like ʿAṭṭār, Iqbāl, too, holds that everything is in movement, and that the road is a traveller even as the wayfarer (J 1720) ; but it is only man who is able to enjoy this wandering and the change and growth of consciousness which is caused by the journey towards God—and into God.

*I am as long as I move—not moving, I am not* (PM 150)—

that is the Iqbalian—and one may say perhaps vitalist—transformation of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*.

The ardent pilgrimage is the privilege of man. The angels are excluded from it, being perfect in their own right; they do not know the never-ending burning with which the human soul is entrusted (AH 16). To the divine bird which human soul is, there is one thing more awful than death: that is the food which ensnares it and hinders it from the flight to heaven (BJ 83)—a sentence which sounds alike to the sighs of mystics who complained of the imprisonment of the poor soul-bird in the cage of the body; but what is intended in Iqbāl's verse is the constant call to reach higher levels, which does not include a contempt of the material world, but is rather a refuse to those who are blind to the endless open ways before the personality.

Underhill has pointed out that

through all these metaphors of pilgrimage to a goal there runs the definite idea that the travelling self in undertaking the journey is fulfilling a destiny, a law of the transcendental life . . .

and that holds true also for Iqbāl, though he probably would not agree with the mystics that this journey must be made "against nature". For him, it is in spite of the struggle which is implied in it, the only true way of nature—towards its most perfect entelechy. The poet has used, though rarely, the old symbol of the way into one's self which is so significant of the mystic interpretation of the road-symbol. This journey into one's own depths means

*To be born without father and mother,  
And to pick the Pleiads from the corner of the roof.*

(ZA GR 225)

Through this interior journey which brings man into contact with the deeper layer of his own personality which he has to sublimate, he can become the spiritual ruler of the world "from the Fish



up to the Moon" (ZA GR 232), and reach new spaces beyond the Galaxy (ZA II 34). This motif of descent into the depths of one's own heart has often been described—in Islamic and non-Islamic literature—as a kind of Heavenly journey, of Ascension; but on the whole the religious types which prefer the one to the other motif can be distinguished rather well. The motif of ascension proper has been preferred by those who wish to stress the personality and transcendence of God Who can be addressed by human words, and can be witnessed through His work in His creation (*via eminentiae*)—whereas the motif of descent has been more frequently used by those mystics who see in God the immanent, impersonal power which cannot be described but by negations and through silence (*via negativa*).

And though Iqbāl has never used the ascent-motif in its elaborate form—as an ascent in fixed grades and steps (as systematizing mystical thought liked to do)—he is, on the whole, a very fine representative of the ascension-type.

The motif of ascension and Heavenly journeys has been treated by specialists so intensely during the last years that it is not necessary to underline the extreme importance which this religious experience—and symbol—has had from times immemorial in both primitive and higher religions. The motif may be interpreted both in a cosmological and psychological sense: it can express the fact that the spirit in the moment of ecstasy can see and understand the different attributes of the created Universe before reaching the Creator beyond the attributes or the psychological truth that man has to pass through different stages of spiritual preparation which may be compared to the seven spheres. In Islamic thought, the ascension gets its special importance due to its connexion with the Prophet's *mi'rāj*, his heavenly journey, during which "he stood upright" (*Sūra* 53:6) before the Almighty, without mediator angel. This journey has become the prototype of the spiritual journeys of the mystics beginning from Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī (d. 874) to Avicenna and Suhrawardī to *Ibn al-ʿArabī*, who describes his autobiography in the form of a *mi'rāj-nāmah*, and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī: these mystics, whose visionary recitals have been studied most carefully during the last years, particularly by H. Corbin, have systematized the spiritual way, whereas Maulānā Rūmī, far from imprisoning the heavenly experience into the system of reason, has never ceased praising the enrapture of the

loving heart which does not care for the difficulties and stations of the road but spreads its wings and sings, animated by longing:

*That is love: to fly heavenward,  
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils !*

Rūmī has, however, put his finger on the fact that this ascension is a psychological experience. (*Mathnavī* III 4512 ff)—

*the nearness of God is beyond reckoning . . .*

and Iqbāl is therefore perfectly right in introducing him in the *Jāvid-nāmah* as explaining the mystery of *mī'rāj* as 'new birth' and 'change of consciousness'. It is exactly what Sarmad has expressed in a quatrain, which was one of the causes of his execution as a heretic:

*Not Ahmad went into Heaven, but Heaven came into Ahmad!*

Iqbāl, though persevering in his spiritual interpretation of the flight towards heaven, has nevertheless made use of a classical motif connected with these Heavenly journeys. Not that he has, in a beautifully arranged epic, dwelt upon the astronomical peculiarities of the single spheres, their colours, their scents, their influences on human mind (as, for instance, Nizāmī did in the *Haft paikar*), but he has taken over the motif of other-worldly discussions, and of a visit to the Other World as a means of political or literary criticism. From the Zoroastrian *Arda-Viraf-Namah* to early Chinese literature this motif is found everywhere, and as Lukian, in the 2nd century A.D., regarded the Other World as a suitable place for learning something about the Homeric question, so in the 11th century the blind Arab poet *al-Ma'arri* made, as his interpreter Prof. Nicholson remarked wittily, "paradise a haunt of immoral but immortal poets," who discuss difficult verses and crucial questions of Arabic grammar: the *Risālat-al-ghufrān* is one of the most ingenious travesties ever written, though lacking completely in religious feeling. A year before Iqbāl published his *Jāvidnāmah*, in which he has combined the ascension-motif with that of the Heavenly discourses (no doubt under Dante's influence) the Iraqi poet Jamil Sidqī al-Zahāwī wrote his satire *Rebellion in Hell* in which he makes the well-bred and highly sophisticated inhabitants of the Hell discuss all the issues of his time at stake, yet, again, without any religious feeling.

It is worth mentioning that even up to the 18th century, great scientists and philosophers like Kepler, Huygens, Kant and Sweden-

borg were inclined to the hypothesis that the planets may be inhabited by beings of different form, and Kant presumed that the perfection of those heavenly creatures might grow in proportion to their distance from the sun, that, for instance, the inhabitants of Jupiter would live on a very high spiritual level. And the Swedenborgian visions show, in some respect, similarity to Iqbāl's qualification of the inhabitants of the spheres; the Poet has shown, in the Heaven of Mercury, a beautiful specimen of "specialization of spiritual energies," as Swedenborg calls the peculiarity of this sphere, and in the Heaven of Mars—in contrast to the traditional, accidental and oriental conception—the "unity of thinking and speaking, of spirit and body" which the Swedish visionary had witnessed in that sphere.

These may be accidents, but, in any case, significant ones: the reader will observe how much Iqbāl's description of his way through the spheres diverges from the traditional picture of the other world. In his dealing with this age-old motif his method of working and writing becomes once more visible: interpreting traditional symbols in a new way, changing them and transforming them according to his own system, and combining the deepest religious experience—every prayer is an ascension—with the exposition of his socio-political ideals.

The ascension, the never-ending journey during this life and after death, unto God and into God's abysses, the growing without diminishing: that is one of the central notions in Iqbāl's poetry. His philosophy of the steadily growing human ego, of the attraction of the all-embracing Divine Ego, of unceasing quest and unsatisfied love as condition for his growth, the importance of prayer in which the prophetic ascension is repeated again and again; all these factors contribute to his predilection for this motif, and the fact that even in his only attempt of leading his readers through different steps of the heavenly regions his description differs notably from those of his predecessors shows that a systematization of the upward movement was not intended, and would have been opposed to his doctrine of free creative possibilities throughout the world. One may be reminded of Rūmī's verse:

*Love is the ascension towards the roof of the King of Beauty,  
Read the story of the ascension from the cheek of the lover!*

**Abbreviations :**

AK *Asrār-i k̲h̲ūdī*

R *Rumūz-i bīk̲h̲ūdī*

PM *Payām-i mashriq*

ZA *Zabūr-i ‘ajam*

L *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*

J *Jāvidnāmah*

Mus *Musāfir*

Pas *Pas cha bāyad kard*

BJ *Bāl-i Jibrīl*

ZK *Ḍarb-i Kalīm*

AH *Armaghān-i Hijāz*

GR *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*

Lalah *Lālah-i Tūr*

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## IQBĀL'S CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND REASON

MIR VALIUDDIN

*Knowledge tells me that love is lunacy,  
Love tells me that knowledge is guess and surmise.  
Do not be book-worms, ye votaries of self delusion,  
For, while love is Direct Consciousness of the Essence, know-  
ledge is like blinkers.  
All that happens in the Universe is the result of burning love;  
Knowledge is concerned with attributes: Love is attached to  
the epicentre of all activity.  
Love is peace and permanence ; it is the essence of life and  
death;  
Knowledge is a big question mark, while love is its implied  
answer.<sup>1</sup>*

For a Perfect Man the ultimate end, the *ultima thule*, of life is nothing else save God! He alone is the Object of his love, devotion and worship! The *Qur'ān* has thus determined this end:

Say: Lo! My worship and my sacrifice, my living and my dying are (all) for God, the Cherisher of the worlds.<sup>2</sup>

The gnostic of Rūm has said:

*Say, is there anything better than He  
Who can give you bliss even for a moment?*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Darb-i Kalim*

علم نے مجھ سے کہا عشق ہے دیوانہ پن  
عشق نے مجھ سے کہا علم ہے تخمین و ظن  
بلند! تخمین و ظن کرم کتابی نہ بن  
عشق سراپا حضور " علم سراپا حجاب  
عشق کی گرمی سے ہے معرکہ کائنات  
علم مقام صفات، عشق تماشاے ذات  
عشق سکون و ثبات، عشق حیات و ممات  
علم ہے پیدا سوال، عشق ہے پلہاں جواب

<sup>2</sup> 6 : 162 :

قل ان صلاتی و نسکی و مہجی و مماتی لله رب العالمین

*Neither joy nor power do I seek,  
What I desire of Thee is thee alone!*<sup>1</sup>

And the adept of Astarābād has given expression to his desire thus:

*I desire to live longing for Thee alone,  
Be dust and be underneath Thy feet!  
Broken and perplexed of all the worlds, I quest for Thee  
alone,  
I wish and desire to love and die for Thee and for Thee  
alone!*<sup>2</sup>

But the knowledge of God, the Ultimate End and Object of our love and life, as He is in His essential nature, is not possible for us. The senses, thought, reason and understanding are at a loss to find Him, for all these faculties are temporal and contingent alone. Hence it is that all philosophers are baffled by the impossibility of attaining to the knowledge of His Essence. His first characteristic is the lack of all characteristics and the final result of the attempt to know Him is stupefaction:

*However great our heavenly knowledge be,  
It cannot penetrate Thy Sanctuary,  
Saints blest with vision and light divine,  
Reach no conceptions adequate to Thee.*<sup>3</sup>

Here the climax of perception is the inability to perceive. The destination reached by perception would be the object of the perception itself and not God. As Rūmī has said:

*You cannot visualize any path beyond the utmost reaches  
of your vision,*

<sup>1</sup> *Mathnavī*:

کھست زو بہتر بگوارے هیچ کس تابدان دل شاد باشی یک نفس  
من نہ شادی خواہم ونے خسروی آنچه من می خواہم از تو ہم توی

<sup>2</sup> *Ṣaḥābī Astarābādī*:

خواہم کہ ہمیشہ در ہوائے تو زیم خاکے بشوم و زیر پائے تو زیم  
مقصود من خستہ گردین توی از بہر تو مدرم و بردائے تو زیم

<sup>3</sup> *Lawā'ih Jāmī*, Flash XXVI, translated by E. H. Whinfield:

ہر چند کہ جان عارف آگاہ بود کے در حرم قدس تواش راہ بود  
دست ہمہ اہل کذف و ارباب شہود از دامن ادراک تو کو تازہ بود

*The utmost reaches possible for reason's quest can certainly not be God (who is beyond the grasp of reason).<sup>1</sup>*

Philosophers who tried to discover the origin and essential nature of God have, truly speaking, wasted their time. As has been well said:

No one knows God except God Himself.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the desire to acquire His gnosis is of no avail; reference is made to this in the *Qur'ān*:

But they shall not compass Him with their knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Prophet Muḥammad had said:

We have not known Thee to the extent that Thy knowledge demands,<sup>4</sup>  
and had warned the thinkers thus:

Do not indulge in speculating on the nature of God lest ye may perish.<sup>5</sup>

As the outcome of thinking is gnosis and the gnosis of the Essence of God is impossible, the consequence of the quest for the impossible would be death. Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, the great Persian mystic, has expressed this idea in his own words thus:

*Why exert to probe the Essence of God?  
Why strain thyself by stretching thy limitations?  
When thou canst not catch even the essence of an atom  
How canst thou claim to know the Essence of God?<sup>6</sup>*

Mystics of all ages agree that the gnosis of the Essence of God is impossible. They have called this Essence 'the Unseen', 'the

<sup>1</sup> *Mathnavi*:

انچه پيش تو پيش از آن ده نهست  
غایت فهم تست الله نهست

<sup>2</sup> لا يعرف الله إلا الله

<sup>3</sup> 20 : 110:

ولا يحيطون به علماً

<sup>4</sup> ما عرفناك حق معرفتك

<sup>5</sup> لا تفكروا في الله فتهلكوا

<sup>6</sup> در ذات خدا فکر فراوان چه کنی  
جان را ز تصور خویش حیران چه کنی  
چون تو نه رسی به کله یک ذره تمام  
در کله خدا دعوی عرفان چه کنی

Incommunicable', 'the Hidden of the Hidden', 'the One of whom all indications are dropped' etc. Shaikh Muḥiy al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī has said plainly:

We are all fools in the matter of the gnosis of the Essence of God.

When this gnosis is not possible, there remains for us the knowledge of the Unity of God (*tauḥīd*), the knowledge that 'God is near us', 'nearer than our jugular vein', 'is all-pervasive' and 'is witness over all things', the knowledge that endears God to us and creates in our heart the ardour of His love. Can this knowledge, which has been termed by the Prophet as 'useful knowledge' (*ʿilm-i nāfiʿ*) be acquired by human intellect? Iqbāl, in agreement with mystics, believes that even this is not possible. This knowledge can only be acquired by love, by faith. Love brings us, as it were, in the immediate presence of God. Love is the 'mother of all books', love is 'peace and permanence', is steady and positive, knowledge bestowed by love carries conviction, has life, heat and light.

Now, if the eye of reason is incapable of perceiving the truths of faith as are the eyes of a person born blind incapable of perceiving things seen by those gifted with sight, then what is the purpose of reason? What is its function in life? What is the purpose for which this instrument has been devised and what is the nature of the work it does? What end does it serve after all? And what is love? Is it the sure means of knowing one's own identity and God? What is its real nature and *modus operandi*? What sort of knowledge does it confer upon us? How far does it soar and what are its limits? These are a few queries and obvious answers to them are desired. Let us turn to Iqbāl for answers to them. We yearn for that bliss which is gained by direct vision, which lies beyond the horizon of empirical knowledge, is suprarational, and is the gift of love alone. Iqbāl maintains:

*For a faithful Muslim, beyond the domain of (empirical)  
knowledge,  
Lies the rapture of longing and also the bliss of direct  
apprehension.<sup>1</sup>*

---

علم کی حد سے پرے بلند مومن کے لئے  
لذت شوق بھی ہے نعمت دیدار بھی ہے

Let us first see what is the essential nature of reason and what are its objects and aims? To follow the teachings of Iqbāl, it is necessary to know the views of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī on this subject, who is the guide and preceptor of Iqbāl and about whom he has said:

*The Master of Rūm transmuted my earth to gold,  
And set my ashes aflame.*

*I am a wave and I will come to rest in his sea,  
That I may make the glistening pearl mine own.*

*I who am drunken with the wine of his song,  
Draw life from the breath of his words.<sup>1</sup>*

### Reason

Rūmī holds that reason is of two kinds. The one he calls 'aql-i juz'ī, or particular or finite reason, guides us in this world of causes and effects, assists us in our struggle for existence. By its help we succeed in the struggle of life, preserve ourselves and provide sustenance for our existence. It is totally subordinate to our appetitive self (naqs) or, in the words of Rūmī, its 'female' companion. It is always busy in catering for its needs and desires, in providing the necessities of daily life. In brief, its function is to attend to the material needs of the organism.

The inter-relation between Self and Reason has been illustrated by Rūmī in this way:

*A story is told of a man and a woman,  
This will illustrate the characteristics of your Self and Reason.*

*Both have their roots in the world,  
And are overwhelmed with mutual conflicts and strifes.  
The woman is after the necessities of daily life,  
That is, she requires water, bread, victuals, prestige and power.*

<sup>1</sup> *The Secrets of the Self*, translation of *Asrār-i khūdī* by R. A. Nicolson, p. 5. Lahore, 1943:

از قیام جلوه‌ها تعمیر کرد  
تا در تابندگی حاصل کنم  
زگاندنی از نفسهایش کنم

پھر رومی خاک را اکسیر کرد  
موجم و در بستر او منزل کنم  
من کہ مستیها ز مہیایش کنم



*Self is as powerless as a woman,  
Some time it suffers humiliation and some time craves for  
elevation.<sup>1</sup>*

The immediate object as well as the ultimate end of Reason is the world. It desires to adore and gratify itself, to provide for itself all the comforts of life. It seeks pleasure and is a votary of earthly idols. Rūmī says that a person governed by such reason is indeed an unfortunate man. He is really not wise, he is certainly an ignoramus, unaware of the real worth and value of life. Like the "chough his life is spent in feeding on excrements."<sup>2</sup>

*Woe betide the man whose reason is 'female'  
And whose ill natured self is 'male' and alert.  
Necessarily his reason will be subdued,  
And face disgrace and disaster.  
Happy indeed is the man whose reason is male (has the  
upperhand)  
And whose spiteful self is female and helpless (subordinate  
to reason).<sup>3</sup>*

Reason is, as it were, 'the fetters for the feet'; it is like a 'scorpion or a serpent'. It concentrates on its immediate object of pleasure and does not see the snare behind it. It does not distinguish between reality and appearance. Being unheedful of the eternal verities of life, it is engrossed in the transitory affairs of the world. It should, then, be sacrificed on the altar of Divine Love, as it has no place in the Divine Court.

*Sacrifice your Reason on the altar of your Friend's love,  
For by itself, it cannot lead you to His Sanctuary.*

<sup>1</sup> *Mathnavi*:

آن مثال نفس خود میدان و عقل  
روز و شب در جنگ و اندر ماجر  
یعنی آب رود و نان و خوار و جاع  
گاه خاکی گاه جوید سروری

<sup>2</sup> عمر زاغ از بهر سرگش خوردن است

<sup>3</sup> نفس زشتی نر و آماده بود  
جز سوئے خسران نبا شد نقل او  
نفس زشتی ماده و مضطر بود

ماجرائے مرد و زن افتاد نقل  
ایں دو پایسته دریں خاکی سرا  
زن همی خواهد حوائج خانگاه  
نفس همچو زن بے چاره گری

وئے آن که عقل او ماده بود  
لا جرم مغلوب باشد عقل او  
اے خلیک آن کس که عقلش نر بود

*Those who think otherwise will realize  
That reason is not like even the dust of the path.  
If God is light, reason represents shade.  
How can shade withstand light?  
Reason is like the Chief Constable  
Who recedes into background when the king arrives on the  
scene.<sup>1</sup>*

To sum up:

i. Reason is an instrument devised to procure the necessities of an organism by appropriate action. As Rūmī puts it, "by this reason you may provide for yourself means of sustenance."<sup>2</sup>

ii. It does not enable us to know the Ultimate Reality.

*Wretchedness lies latent in reason.*

*How can it reach the destination without following the  
Guided ones?<sup>3</sup>*

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the eminent German philosopher and well-known exponent of pessimism, held similar views about the nature and function of reason. According to him the Ultimate Reality is the Absolute Will. Reason has been created to provide for the biological needs of the organism. Its sole function is to fulfil these needs and wants on the fulfilment of which depends the life of an individual. Thought enables the individual to cope with the difficulties of life and to safeguard his own being. In the words of Schopenhauer,

Reason is a useful instrument, and it is given to us to secure the practical needs of life. Hence, its sole function is to satisfy and fulfil these needs. Reason is not designed to understand the nature or essence of the Ultimate Reality. In other words it should not indulge in philosophizing, neither it should attempt the probe into the metaphysical problems. He who desires to acquire the knowledge of Ultimate Reality by means of his reason is using an instrument not devised for such a task.<sup>4</sup>

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عقل را قرباں کن اندر عشق دوست      عقل را یاری نہ اس سویست کوست<sup>1</sup>  
اے کہ بردہ عقل ہدیہ تا الہ      عقل انجا کمتر است از خاک راہ  
عقل چوں سایہ بود، حق آفتاب      سایہ را با آفتاب حق چہ تاب  
عقل چوں شعلہ است، چو سلطان دید      شعلہ بیچارہ در کنجہ خزید  
بدیں عقل می آری از ذاتی را<sup>2</sup>  
ہست پنهانی شقاوت عقل را      کے بہاید منزلے بے نقل را<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Schopenhauer, *The world as Will and Idea*, translated by Haldane and Kemp, Vol. III. p. 21.

Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār has related his own experience:

*For long reason has been my guide on the path to God,  
I have made full use of it.  
After a long and hard struggle lasting for a lifetime,  
I realized that God could not be realized by reason.<sup>1</sup>*

Schopenhauer's view has paved the way for a new and vital movement in modern times known as Pragmatism. The pragmatic approach to the mind problem is even more biological and evolutionary than some similar new movements. We start with an organism, an animal or a man that has a practical problem to solve, perhaps to get food, perhaps to escape an enemy. Hence arises a situation, a problem to be dealt with; the environment is to be moulded to the needs of the subject. This involves experimentation; and what we have to do with, therefore, is the experience of the subject in this experimental moulding of the environment. Now there is certain stage in this experience when it becomes reflective and rational or intelligent. The pragmatic theory of mind or reason is briefly summarized by Patrick thus:

In the development of organisms there is a stage prior to that of reflection; it is characterized by mere liking or disliking, striving, endeavour, and is determined by definitely organized systems of neural discharge. In the next stage, incompatible factors arise in some definite situation; conflicting stimuli indicate conflicting ways of response; there is trouble, tension, a perplexing situation. Hence arises the necessity for readjustment. The new situation has to be integrated; the response has to be adapted to the new situation. Experimentation follows, and selection; conduct is to be controlled by its consequences; future consequences become transformed into a stimulus for behaviour. Now such adaptive behaviour is called reflective, conscious, mental. The mind, therefore, is instrumental, serving biological ends. Pragmatism of this kind is sometimes called Instrumentalism.<sup>2</sup>

A further glance at that kind of Pragmatism called Instrumentalism will help us to understand the origin of reason, reflection, memory and thought. The Instrumentalist is a biologist and evolutionist. He is interested in showing how knowledge has arisen in the evolutionary movement and in pointing out the function of intelligence or reason. He, therefore, assumes outright the presence of the organism with its vital interests and assumes also the presence of a

عقلے کہ بسے راہبرے ساختمش در معرفت خدائے بگداختمش<sup>1</sup>  
عمرم برسید تابدین عقل ضعیف شناختم این قدر کہ شناختمش

<sup>2</sup> G. T. W. Patrick, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 258.

real environment consisting of natural energies. Experience, then, is the intercourse of the living organism with its physical and social environment.<sup>1</sup>

The Instrumentalist, then, taking for granted the organism and its needs, goes on to show by the analysis of experience, how such things as thought, reflection, intelligence, ideas, and concepts may be explained. He shows that the environmental energies are sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile to the good of the individual. The latter, therefore, is confronted with the task of controlling and moulding the environment to his own welfare; he must achieve the good and avert the evil. In such an enterprise, memory, imagination, reflection and thought will be of priceless advantage in the struggle for existence, and by Darwinian laws will be encouraged and preserved.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Bergson, on whose works Iqbal has largely drawn, adopts the same view about the origin and function of the intellect as held by the Pragmatists. The intellect, according to Bergson, "is an appendage to the faculty of action." It is a special faculty evolved for the purpose of action. Life in a world of ceaseless flow and change would present difficulties from the point of view of effective action, which the intellect is designed to overcome. The intellect, therefore, makes cuts across the living flow of reality, and carves out of it solid objects, which we call material objects, and separates states of consciousness which persist until they are succeeded by other states. But the distinct outlines we see in an object are not really there in the flux of reality. They are only the design that we have imposed on reality to suit our own purposes.

Thus, the intellect presents us with a false view of reality, because, in order to further the purpose of action, that is to say, the ends which we desire to obtain, it represents reality as composed of points upon which we rest. "If matter," says Bergson, "appeared to us as a perpetual flowing, we should assign no termination to any of our action . . . . In order that our activity may leap from an act to an act, it is necessary that matter should pass from a state to state."<sup>3</sup>

In this way, Bergson thinks that the intellect, being a practical instrument according to its essential nature, is unable to grasp the ultimate nature of things. It is not devised for this kind of work. It

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<sup>1</sup> See John Dewey et al., *Creative Intelligence*, pp 7 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> See C.E.M. Joad, *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, pp 97-99. Oxford, 1958.

presents us with a false view of Reality! We are reminded of what 'Attār said long ago:

*Philosophers chalked out various paths to reach Thee,  
They were all based on reasoning and intellect!  
Failure was writ large in the end,  
Frustration compelled them to abandon the quest.<sup>1</sup>*

After noting these thoughts of the modern thinkers on the nature and function of the intellect, let us now consider the teachings of Iqbāl. It appears he does not differ much in this respect from others. In his work, *Asrār-i khūdī*, Iqbāl states lucidly that the intellect which makes use of the novel and soars up to heavens, has been created for the preservation of life, just as hand, brain, eye and ear, feeling and memory are weapons devised by life for self preservation. Iqbāl says:

*What is the source of our wakeful eye?  
Our delight in seeing hath taken visible shape.  
The partridge's leg is derived from the elegance of its gait;  
The nightingale's beak from its endeavour to sing.  
Away from the reed-bed, the reed became happy:  
The music was released from its prison.  
What is the essence of the mind that strives after new discoveries and scales the heavens?  
Knowest thou what works this miracle?  
'Tis desire that enriches Life,  
And the mind is a child of its womb.  
What are social organizations, customs and laws?  
What is the secret of the novelties of Science?  
A desire which realized itself by its own strength  
And burst forth from the heart and took shape.  
Nose, hand, brain, eye and ear,  
Thought, imagination, feeling, memory and understanding—  
All these are weapons devised by Life for self-preservation  
In its ceaseless struggle.  
The object of Science and art is not knowledge,  
The object of the garden is not the bud and the flower.  
Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life,  
Science is a means of invigorating the Self.*

---

ارباب نظر یسے بیندیشدند      هریک بدوت راه دگر بگزیدند<sup>1</sup>  
حاصل بجز از صبحز نیامده‌ام      و آخر همه از صبحز طمع پیریدند

*Science and art are servants of Life,  
Slaves born and bred in its house.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus by virtue of its being an instrument for the preservation of life and subsisting in the sphere of time and space, Intellect gains knowledge of phenomena by means of the external and internal senses so that it might achieve the practical and utilitarian purposes of life. In this way its aim is to rid us of difficulties, help us to adapt ourselves to our environment, remove the needs and wants of life, and make us succeed in our struggle for existence. As Iqbāl puts it:

*Intellect is enchained in the sphere of time and space (and is  
thus a victim of expediency).*

*It is a worshipper of sensual objects.*

*It conceals an idol up its sleeve,*

*Born of a Brahman, it even wears the symbolic thread.<sup>2</sup>*

To make activity fruitful and to fulfil the purposes of life, it is necessary to discover the laws of nature and to conquer the forces of nature. The eye of the intellect is usually on the look-out for this:

*Secrets of stars and elements are within my sight,  
The world is within my shooting range.*

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of the Self*, pp 14-15:

بست صورت لذت دیدار ما  
بلبل از سعی نوا ملقار یافت  
نغمه از زندان او آزاد شد  
هیچ میدانی که این اعجاز چیست  
عقل از رائیدگان بطن اوست  
چیست راز تازگه‌های علوم  
سرز دل بیرون زدو صورت به بست  
فکر و تخیل و شعور و یاد و هوش  
بهر حفظ خویشی این آلات ساخت  
غلجته و گل از چمن مقصود نیست  
علم از اسباب تقویم خودی است  
علم و فن از خانه زادن حیات

چیست اصل دیده بیدار ما  
کبک پا از شوخی رفتار یافت  
نه برون از نیستان آباد شد  
عقل ندرت کوش و گردون تاز چیست  
زندگی سرمایه دار آرزوست  
چیست نظم قوم و آئین و رسوم  
آرزوے کو به‌زور خود شکست  
دست و دندان و دماغ و چشم و گوش  
زندگی مرکب چو درجگاه باخت  
آگهی از علم و فن مقصود نیست  
علم از سامان حفظ زندگی است  
علم و فن از پیش خیزان حیات

<sup>2</sup> *Payām-i mashriq*:

پرستار بتان چشم و گوش است  
برهن زان زار پوش است

خرد زنجیری امروز و دوش است  
سلم در آستین پوشیده دارد



*My eyes rove round the terrestrial world,  
And bothers not about the celestial.  
Thousand musical notes flow from my organ,  
The secrets I have gathered are for the entire world.<sup>1</sup>*

Intellect illuminates the path of life, it is a 'lamp on the road-side'. It makes the eyesight of the passer-by keener, but it is totally unaware of the destination:

*Intellect serves the purpose of a lamp to the wayfarer,  
What is intellect? It is the lamp on the roadside.  
What agitations there are inside  
The road-side light is absolutely unaware of.<sup>2</sup>*

Again:

*Leave intellect behind, as it is no more than a lamp  
Which lights the way, and is not the destination (an end in  
itself).<sup>3</sup>*

Philosophy, whose organ is intellect, attempts to discover the origin and essence, the end and purpose of the world we live in, to probe into the mysteries of existence, and tries to interpret them, but the intellect is totally incapable of performing this task. It is not predestined to take us in the immediate presence of Reality. Iqbāl maintains:

*Intellect leads us to a blind alley,  
Philosophy takes one away from Life.*

<sup>1</sup> *Payām-i mashriq (Muḥāwara-i 'ilm wa ishq):*

گرفتار کمندم روزگار است	نکاهم راز دار هفت و چار است
مرا بیا نسوے گردن چه کار است	= سہارگان = عناعر
ببازار افکنم رازے کہ دُرم	چہاں بیلم بایں سو باز کردند
	= چشم =
	چکد صد نغمہ از سازے کہ دارم

<sup>2</sup> *Bāl-i Jibrīl:*

خرد کیا ہے چراغ دہ گزر ہے	خرد سے راہرو روشن بصر ہے
چراغ رہگزر کو کیا خبر ہے	درون خانہ ہنگامے ہیں کیا کیا
<sup>3</sup> چراغ دہ ہے منزل نہیں ہے	گزر جا عقل سے آگے کہ یہ نور

*Hegel's shell contains no pearl,  
His knowledge is mere groundless assumption!  
Concern yourself with the teachings of Muḥammad,  
O son of 'Alī! How long will you run after Bū-'Alī*  
(Avicenna).<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the philosopher to a book-worm Iqbāl seems to tell him:

Fie on you! You desire to gain the knowledge of Reality and acquire the wisdom of life through books, and eventually bewildered, you admit: "I have now come to know that I do not know anything!" The fact is that the instrument you are employing for this purpose was never devised for it.

Thus Iqbāl says:

*One night in my study room I heard  
A book-worm saying to a moth:  
"I have passed a long time in studying the books of  
Avicenna,  
And have also seen a number of Fārābī's works,  
But could never grasp the secret of life!  
Deprived of light I am enveloped in darkness!"  
The half-seared moth aptly replied:  
"This subtle point can never be found in any book;  
Burning love adds zest to life,  
And bestows on it the strength to soar to greater heights."<sup>2</sup>*

Of course, a philosopher or a thinker is gifted with all the imagination desired as well as vigour to soar high, but the instru-

<sup>1</sup> ہے فلسفہ زندگی سے دوری  
ہے اس کا علم سب خیالی  
اے پور علی زبو علی چند

<sup>2</sup> Payām-i mashriq:

یہ پروانہ می گفت کرم کتابی  
بسے دیدم از نسخه فارابی  
ہماں تہرہ روزم ز بے آفتابی  
کہ امیں نکتہ را در کتاب نیابی  
تپس می دہد ہال و پر زندگی را

انجام خرد ہے ہے حضوری  
ہیکل کا حدف گہر سے خالی  
دل در سخن مکتدی بند

شاہدیم شیے در کتب خانہ خویش  
باوراق سہلا نہہمن گرفتیم  
نہ فہمیدہ ام حکمت زندگی را  
نکو گفت پروانہ نہم سوزے  
تپس می کلد زندہ تر زندگی را

ment he uses for the discovery of Truth deprives him of the pleasure of his hunt. Iqbāl brings out this point thus:

*Though gifted with high imagination, the philosopher  
possessed neither courage nor insight.  
Hence he could not discover the arcane secret of love.  
The vulture soars, like falcon, high in search of prey,  
Yet it cannot enjoy the pleasure of hunting the game of life.<sup>1</sup>*

As intellect is only an instrument for the preservation of life and is meant to procure the satisfaction of its utilitarian and pragmatic purposes, its actions are directed against matter and it deals with matter, a lifeless thing. In other words, Intellect is created for the sole purpose of acting on matter alone and with it only it is concerned. Human spirit can never be gratified alone! As Iqbāl puts it:

*Philosophers carve out a figure of a dead thing,  
They do not possess the miraculous touch of Moses or Christ.  
My heart could find nothing of value in their philosophy,  
It yearned all the while for some other kind of wisdom.<sup>2</sup>*

Engaged in dealing with matter, intellect covers the face of reality with thick veils. Space and time are the veils which conceal the reality from its view. Human spirit longs for the direct vision of God—the Ultimate Reality.

*Intellect has covered Thy Face with a thick veil,  
My thirsty eyes yearn for a glimpse of Thy Vision.<sup>3</sup>*

When intellect moves out of its sphere and aims at the discovery of the secrets of reality what happens is that if one knot seems to be untied, another knot is then and there formed in its place! Human spirit needs that vision which penetrates through all veils, rests itself on the effulgent face of Reality.

*What shall I do, the deceitful intellect (instead of unravelling  
the mystery) ravel it all the more,*

---

بلند بال تھا لیکن نہ تھا جسور و غیور حکیم سر مصیبت سے بے نصیب رہا  
پھر افساؤں میں کر گس اگرچہ شاہیں وار شکار زندہ کی لذت سے بے نصیب رہا  
حکیمیاں مردہ را صورت نگارند ید موسیٰ دم عیسیٰ ندارند  
دریں حکمت دلم چیزے ندید است برائے حکمت دیگر تپید است  
خود بر چہرہ تو پردہ ہا بافت نگاه تشنہ دیدار دارم<sup>3</sup>

*I long for that vision that may break through this phenomenal  
charm (and lead me to the real).<sup>1</sup>*

Again, condemning intellect on another count Iqbāl says:

*Every moment our intellect chisels for us a new idol!  
Released from one bondage we fall into a new pit!<sup>2</sup>*

Now intellect, as it is 'tied to the present and past', is a 'victim of expediency', is a 'worshipper of sensual pleasures', 'conceals an idol up its sleeves', 'born of a Brahman it even wears the symbolic thread' and is ignorant of real values—such intellect should be sacrificed at the altar of Universal Reason or Divine knowledge. This is what Iqbāl learned from Rūmī who taught him:

*Sacrifice your intellect at the feet of Muṣṭafā (the Prophet)  
And say: "God is all too sufficient for me!"  
It is better to be an ignoramus than possess such intellect:  
And far better to become insane!  
He is really mad who has not become mad,  
And on seeing the Chief Constable (sharīf-a)  
does not seek shelter in the house.<sup>3</sup>*

Following the teachings of his spiritual preceptor, Iqbāl has taught us to abandon the path of Reason and to follow Revelation, for through faith, piety and love alone we can reach Divine Presence:

*Abandon the path of Reasoning, for one reaches Divine  
Presence  
Through humility and piety.<sup>4</sup>  
Consult not devious intellect about the road to your desti-  
nation.*

<sup>1</sup> چہ کنم کہ عقل بہانہ جو گرہے بروے گرہ زند

نظرے کہ گردش چشم تو شکند طلسم سبجاز من

<sup>2</sup> می تراشد فکر ماہر دم خداوندے دگر

دست از یک بند تا افتاد در بند دگر

<sup>3</sup> عقل قرباں کن بہ پیش مصطفیٰ حسبی اللہ گو کہ اللہ ام کافی

زین خرد جاہل ہمی باید شدن دست در دیوانگی باید زند

اوست دیوانہ کہ دیوانہ نشد این عسی را دید و در خانہ نشد

<sup>4</sup> رہ عاقلی دہاکن کہ باوتواں رسیدن بدل نیاز مندے بہ گناہ پاکبازے

*Look up to Love which has a knowledge in solving your  
problem.<sup>1</sup>*

*Depend not on intellect, but dive into the sea of Love,  
The shallow water of intellect does not yield pearls.<sup>2</sup>*

*Use the microscope of Love to detect the Divine Presence,  
Intellect regards the world around as a magic show!<sup>3</sup>*

*Intellect destroys time and again every thing it constructs,  
Love is reality and all else is unreal.<sup>4</sup>*

*Intellect has no escape from its imaginary idols,  
Philosopher and layman both worship their own creations.<sup>5</sup>*

In religious terminology, sacrificing particular or individual intellect on the altar of Universal Reason, or Divine Knowledge, is called Faith (or *īmān*). When an individual makes his reason and knowledge subservient to Revelation, he is called a 'true believer'. He does not really lose his intellect or suffer from mental aberration; on the other hand, he begins to acquire that Intellect which is a Light given to God's elects only, and which dispels all darkness and illumines every bleak corner of the mind.

When one subjects one's finite intellect to Divine Knowledge completely, one becomes, according to Rūmī, all-wise:

*If, due to wonder, you happen to lose this intellect,  
Every root of your hair, then, will be infused with reason.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> نشان راه ز عقل هزار حیلہ مہرس  
بہاکہ عشق کمالے زیبک فلی دارد

<sup>2</sup> بگزد از عقل و در آویز موج یم عشق  
کہ دران چوے تلک مایہ گہر پیدانہست

<sup>3</sup> بچشم عشق نگو تا سراغ او گیری  
جہاں بچشم خرد سہمیہ و نیرنگ است

<sup>4</sup> زمان زمان شکند آنچه می تراشد عقل  
با کہ عشق مسلمان و عقل زناری است

<sup>5</sup> عقل کو ملتی نہیں اپنے یتوں سے نجات  
عارف و عامی تمام بندۂ لات و منات

<sup>6</sup> *Mathnavi*:

زین سراز چہرت اگر عقلت دود  
ہو سب مرویت سو عقلے بود

This gradation of intellects has been lucidly explained by Rūmī thus.

*Note well this gradation of intellects!*  
*One stage is as different from the other as heaven and earth.*  
*One intellect due to its effulgence resembles the sun;*  
*Another is much less bright than the stars.*  
*One can be compared to the short-lived meteor,*  
*Another to the street lamp.*  
*Human intellect is just a reflection of the intellect of the*  
*Perfect Man;*  
*If the latter is musk, the former is its fragrance.*  
*God-possessioned Man represents Universal Soul and Universal*  
*Reason.*  
*Divine emblems do not exist apart from him.*  
*He is the manifestation of the Divine Essence:*  
*Seek God through him and not through others.<sup>1</sup>*

Iqbāl clearly distinguishes the intellect that represents the Universal Reason from the one which is pragmatic and whose function is to solve the practical difficulties of life. He calls the former 'aql-i jahān bīn or the reason that comprehends the entire creation, and the latter as one which is 'engrossed in itself' ('aql-i khūd bīn). The latter is a prey to guess and conjecture and makes surmises, and the former lifts the veil and peeps into the Secret Chamber. Iqbāl expounds as follows:

*There is as much difference between the Intellect that is*  
*'engrossed in itself', and the Intellect that 'comprehends*  
*the entire creation',*  
*As there is difference between the limbs of a falcon and*  
*wings of a nightingale.*  
*How different is the bird that picks its grain of food from the*  
*earth*

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

در مراتب از زمین تا آسمان  
 هست عقلی کمتر از زهره شهاب  
 هست عقلی چون چراغ سرخوشی  
 عقل او مشک است و عقل خالق بو  
 عرش و کرسی اژدها کزوه جداست  
 دو بچو حق را ازو دیگر مجبو

این تفاوت عقلها را نیک دان  
 هست عقلی از ضیا چون آفتاب  
 هست عقلی چون ستاره آتشی  
 عقله خلق عکس عقل او  
 عقل کل و نفس کل مورد خداست  
 مظهر حق است ذات پاک او

*When compared to the one that draws sustenance from  
celestial bodies.*

*To stroll in the park, like the morning breeze, is one thing,  
But to become a part of the life of the rose is quite  
different:*

*Lifting the veil and having a good look in the Secret Chamber  
Is definitely different from making surmises while remaining  
out of the Chamber.*

*Lucky is the vision that pervades both the worlds  
And combines the light of angel with the burning love of the  
heart of a human being.<sup>1</sup>*

The necessary outcome of faith is love, as the *Qur'ān* asserts:

Those of faith are overflowing in their love for God.<sup>2</sup>

### Love

According to Iqbāl, *‘ishq* (or ardent) is the outcome of belief in the First Article of the Muslim Faith:

There is none worthy of worship or devotion (*ilāh*) except God and Muḥammad is His Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

This belief is not based on the findings of discursive reason but rests entirely on revelation. The truth is realized by the lover to such an extent that it permeates his entire being, body and soul

عقل خود بھی دگر و عقل جہاں بھی دگر است<sup>1</sup>  
بال بلبل دگر و بازوئے شاہیں دگر است  
دگر است آن کہ برد دانہ افتادہ ز خاک  
آنکہ گہر خورش از دانہ پرویں دگر است  
دگر است آن کہ زند سہر چمن مثل نسیم  
آنکہ در شد بہ صہر گل و نسوین دگر است  
دگر است آن سوئے نہ پردہ کشادن نظری  
ایں سوئے پردہ گمان و ظن و تخمین دگر است  
اے خوش آن عقل کہ پہنای در عالم با اوست  
نور آفرشته و سوز دل آدم با اوست

<sup>2</sup> *Qur'ān* 2:165:

الذین املوا اشد حبا لله

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله<sup>3</sup>



both. Faith, too, is nothing but to testify to this sacred article. And faith begets love, in other words, love is synonymous with faith. As Iqbāl says:

*What is love? It is to hurl tauhīd (Unity) at your heart  
(like a thunderbolt)*

*And then to hurl yourself at every obstacle.<sup>1</sup>*

The first half of faith is the firm belief in the worshipability (ʿulūhiyat) of God. Firmly and sincerely we should believe, without demanding any reason or argument, that God Almighty alone is the object of our worship and devotion; He alone is our Lord and Cherisher, our Creator and Master, and we are his ʿabd or devotees and creatures. This faith conveys to us the news that

God is full of mercy to the believers<sup>2</sup>

and we feel solace and comfort. We feel convinced that after faith in God Almighty, He would be benevolent. We are now, in the words of Shaikh Jilānī,

at rest in body, contented in mind, erect in bearing, the face beaming with the light of God, the heart enlightened with it and oblivious of things due to nearness with God, the Merciful.<sup>3</sup>

When we think of the favours and blessings of God, our heart is filled with an ardent love for God. The love of God permeates our being and at the dictates of love we do not hesitate to lay down even our life. Says Iqbāl:

*If love commands surrender your life,  
Because love is what you seek and desire and not life.<sup>4</sup>*

Pragmatic intellect does not lead us to God. It is faith alone that begets love of God within us, when we sacrifice our intellect and believe firmly in the Truth revealed to the Prophet of Islam. As Iqbāl has said:

*From where do love and ecstasy emanate?  
It is a ray from the Sun of the Prophet of Islam.*

<sup>1</sup> عاشقی تو حید را بر دل زدن و آنکه خود را به هر مشکل زدن

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān 33: 43:

كان بالمؤمنين رحيماً

<sup>3</sup> ساکن الجوارح، مطمئن الجنان، مشروح الصدر، ملود الوجه، عامر البطن  
فلياً عن الاشياء لخالقتها

<sup>4</sup> عشق اگر فرمان دهد از جان شیرین هم گذر

عشق محبوب است و مقصود است و جان مقصود نه

*You are alive as long as intense love for Him is in your heart.*

*It is His love that protects your faith.<sup>1</sup>*

In other words, love of God emanates from a staunch belief in the teachings of the Prophet and following in his footsteps. As the *Qur'ān* instructs the Prophet to declare:

Say: If you do love God, follow me. God will love you.<sup>2</sup>

Iqbāl conveys the meaning of this verse in his own words thus:

*It you love God consolidate it by obeying your guide,  
Till your rope can reach God and hold Him.<sup>3</sup>*

Bāyazīd of Bisṭām abstained from tasting the musk-melon merely because he was not certain whether the Prophet had partaken of it. This is what is termed *fides implicita* (*taglīd*) or implicitly obeying the beloved. Iqbāl explains it thus:

*The wine of love gives birth to many moods.  
One of them is the implicit obedience of the beloved.  
The sage of Bisṭām excelled in this art:  
He did not taste melon, as he was not certain if the Prophet  
had done it.  
Create an army for yourself with the help of the King of love  
And then appear in all glory on the summit of love  
So that the Lord of the Holy Ka'ba may bless you  
And choose you as His deputy.<sup>4</sup>*

*Fides implicita* is not possible unless one loves the Prophet. Love alone stimulates it. Following the precepts of the Prophet and obeying the commandments of God is the essence of *sharī'a*. Giving

<sup>1</sup> دانی آخر عشق و مستی از کجا است این شعاع آفتاب مصطفی است  
زنده تا سوز او در جان تست این نگه دارنده ایمان تست

<sup>2</sup> *Qur'ān* 3: 31:

قل ان کلتکم تعبدون الله فاتبعونی یحبکم الله

عاشقی محکم شو از تقلید یار  
کیفیتها خیزد از صهیائے عشق  
تا کمند تو شود یزدان شکار  
همست هم تقلید از اسمائے عشق  
کامل بسطام در تقلید فرد  
لشکرے پیدا کن از سلطان عشق  
تا خدای کعبه بدواز ترا  
شرح انی جاعل سازد ترا  
اجتناب از خوردن خربوزه کرد  
جلوه گر شو بر سر فاران عشق

up the pursuit of lust (or what the *Qur'ān* calls *hawā*), smashing the idols of base passions is possible only when love takes possession of the heart. Every act or motion of a true lover is motivated by love alone. As Iqbāl puts it:

*Love of God has charged the mind of Muslim with dynamism,  
He is really an unbeliever if he does not cherish this love.  
A Muslim's likes and dislikes, even his daily routine,  
Are subject to Divine Commandments.<sup>1</sup>*

In other words, faith means love for God. A heart devoid of love is devoid of faith. The necessary consequence of love is a fervent longing to attain the proximity of the Beloved and total resignation to His will. The will of God is disclosed in the teachings of the Prophet, for the Prophet never says anything of his own desire, as the *Qur'ān* has informed us:

Nor does he (the Prophet) say aught of (his own) desire.  
It is no less than inspiration sent down to him.<sup>2</sup>

Thus faith means intense yearning for God, and earnest effort to follow the example of the Prophet. And according to Iqbāl '*ishq* (ardent love) is nothing but belief in *tauḥīd* (Unity) and scrupulous observance of what God has made lawful and unlawful. Iqbāl posits:

*Life is regulated by code and laws of Love;  
The basis of civilization is religion and religion is love.  
A religion does not mature unless it masters the code of Love.  
Acquire proficiency in religion by keeping company of the  
lovers of God.  
Love outwardly may appear fiery and blazing,  
In reality, it is Divine Light.<sup>3</sup>*

طبع مسلم از صفت قاهر است      مسلم از عاشق نباشد کافر است  
تابع حق دیدنش نا دیدنش      خوردنش نوشیدنش خواہدندش

<sup>2</sup> 53: 3, 4:

و ماینطق عن الہوی ان ہو الا وحی یوحی  
زندگی را شرع و آئین است عشق  
اصل تہذیب است دین، دین است عشق  
دین نہ گردد پختہ بے آداب عشق  
دین بگہر از صفت ارباب عشق  
ظاہر او سوزناک و آتشین  
باطن او نور رب العالمین

The above is a presentation of Iqbāl's views on love and its essential nature. Now I propose to refer briefly to the miraculous results which flow from love. Let us consider the changes that are brought about in human nature when love of God gets deeply rooted in it. How strong a lover becomes in his acts and deeds? To what extent the vision of a lover is widened and what portions of bliss, peace of mind and ataraxy is bestowed on him?

### *Love and Work*

Our intellect guides us to find a solution of the multifarious difficulties and obstacles that we have to face in the course of our day to day life. But that which excites and impels us to action, that which is the real motive of our efforts, is emotion, and no emotion is stronger than love or faith! For this reason, it is not easy to form an idea of the might and majesty of a lover of God:

As Iqbāl has put it:

*Who can evaluate its power and influence?*

*A glance of a believer can change destinies!<sup>1</sup>*

Again,

*When 'poverty' (faqr) creates an impact under the skies,*

*The sun and the moon shudder at its trumpet call.*

*Poverty in rags won the battles of Badr and Hunain;*

*Poverty at its best is seen in Husain's proclamation of God's  
Omnipotence.<sup>2</sup>*

And Iqbāl states further:

*What does the 'poverty' of a believer mean? The conquest  
of the Universe!*

*By its virtue man acquires and imbibes the attributes of the  
Creator Himself.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> کوئی اندازہ کر سکتا ہے اسکے زور بازو کا

نگاہ مرد مومن سے بدل جاتی ہیں تقدیریں

<sup>2</sup> فقر چو عریاں شوں زیر سپر

از نہیب او بہ لرزن ماہ و مہر

فقر عریاں گرمی بدر و حنین

فقر عریاں بانگ تکبہر حسین

<sup>3</sup> فقر مومن چیست تسخیر چہات

بلدہ از تاثیر او مولی صفات

## IQBĀL'S CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND REASON

Love reveals the 'secrets of sovereignty', discloses the ways of the 'gnosis of self'. Love does not care a rap for any danger: at its sight thrones begin to shake, tyranny is overpowered, it restores freedom and puts an end to despotism. Says Iqbāl:

*The man who adopts poverty confronts kings,  
Thrones shake at the majesty of his mat.  
His divine madness creates awe in entire cities.  
He rescues the masses from oppression and tyranny.  
He takes his abode in that forest  
Where falcons dread pigeons!  
He derives his power through ecstasy and treading the path  
of God,  
While he ignores and disowns kings to their faces!<sup>1</sup>*

Again,

*He is his own Abraham and his own Sanctuary!  
Like Ishmael he is ever ready to sacrifice himself.  
The skies are like Khaibar fortresses awaiting to be  
conquered.  
He launches his attack from 'Ali's pedestal.  
These expeditions purify not merely his soul,  
But make him sturdy, alert and agile.<sup>2</sup>*

In spite of its penury, Love has power to smash a mountain. It is not afraid of a flashing sword or the keenest poniard:

*Love has no implements but just an axe,  
Which can bore holes in mountains without shedding a drop  
of lover's blood.<sup>3</sup>*

- <sup>1</sup> با سلاطین در فتد مرد فقیر از شکوه پوریا لرزد سریر  
از جلوس می افکند هوئے به شهر وارهاند خلق را از جبر و قهر  
می نگهرد جزایان صحرا مقام کاندرو شاهین گریزد از حمام  
قالب آورد قوه از جذب و ساوک پهن سلطان نعره اولاملوک
- <sup>2</sup> خود حریم خویش و ابراهیم خویش چون ذبیح الله در تسلیم خویش  
پیش او نه آسمان نه خیمه است ضربت او از مقام حیدر است  
وین ستهز دهمدم پاکش کند مستحکم و سیار و چالاکش کند
- <sup>3</sup> ندارد عشق سامان و لهن تهنه داند  
خراشد سینه کسار و پاک از خون پرویز است

*Love does not dread swords and daggers,  
It is not rooted in the elements which constitute life.  
Love is the cause of concords as well as conflicts;  
In fact Love is the source and essence of life and also a  
scimitar bedded with jewels.*

*Love's glance can split rocks,  
Love of God in the end terminates in God!<sup>1</sup>*

Love's strength is not due to strong nerves or muscles. Its strength is not terrestrial, it is divine. It works in the veins and arteries of the lover as a Divine force. To oppose it is to oppose God Himself:

*Love is an expedition beyond space,  
It can leave the world without entering the grave.  
Love's power is not based on earth, water and air,  
Nor does it consist of strong nerves.  
Love conquers Khaibar on oatmeal,  
It splits the surface of the moon.  
Without dealing a blow it destroyed Nimrod.  
It defeated Pharoah without a fight.  
Its role is superior to religion and intellect.  
Love rules the world and has none to question.  
The two worlds are swayed by Love.  
It is love which enables yesterday to move towards tomorrow,  
The ups and downs in the realm of space are manifestations  
of love.<sup>2</sup>*

عشق را از تیغ و خنجر پاک نیست<sup>1</sup>  
اصل عشق از آب و باد و خاک نیست  
دو جهان هم صلح و هم بیگانه عشق  
آب جہول تیغ جہودار عشق  
از نکلہ عشق خارا شق شود  
عشق حق آخر سراپا حق شود

عشق شبخونے زدن ہو لا ممکن  
رود عشق از باد و خاک و آب نیست  
عشق با نان جوین خہر کشاد  
کله نمرود ہے ضربے شکست  
عشق ہم خاکستر و ہم اخگر است  
عشق سلطان است و پرهان مہیں  
لا زمان و دوش و فردائے آؤ  
کور را نادیدہ رفتن از جہان<sup>2</sup>  
قوتش از سختی اعصاب نیست  
عشق دو اندام مہ چاکے نہاد  
لشکر فرعون ہے حربے شکست  
کار او از دین و دانش ہو تر است  
ہر دو عالم عشق را زیر نگین  
لا ممکن و زیر و بالائے آؤ

### Broadening of Vision

When the pragmatic intellect is subjected to Universal Reason, in other words, to Love or faith, our vision is broadened. As Rūmī has pointed out, the finite intellect can see nothing "beyond the grave." It remains puzzled in the maze of causes and effects. It cannot step forward beyond this contingent world of cause and effect. It is not gifted with the vision which peeps into the Unseen. Rūmī says:

*Intellect cannot reach beyond the grave,  
But a man with a vision can survey events till the end of  
creation.*

*Intellect cannot survey spiritual fields.  
Its range is circumscribed by things mundane.  
Abandon the path of intellect,  
Seek the vision which penetrates into the unseen and be  
blessed.*

*This intellect and this sight will but confuse you,  
So do not any more use this sight and wait (on God).  
Seek not greatness among mere talkers:  
Those waiting for inspiration should be good listeners.<sup>1</sup>*

Love visualizes beyond the grave, in one jump it passes over the world of time and space and looks into the regions of the Unseen:

*Love decided the matter by taking the universe in its stride,  
I had thought that the earth and the sky were boundless.<sup>2</sup>*

When the true believer sacrifices his intellect at the feet of the Prophet, he believes in all the facts of the unseen. And it may be noted that these are the objects of that vision which is described by the *Qur'ān* as follows:

His sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong, for truly did he see  
of the Signs of his Lord, the Greatest<sup>3</sup>

کن ز صاحبِ دل چو نفعِ صور بود	پہلے بیہوشی خورد تا گور بود
وین قدمِ عرصۂ صجائبِ نسہد	ایں خورد از خاکِ گورے نگزود
چشمِ فہمی جو و برخوردار شو	زین قدم وین عقل پس بھزار شو
پس نظرِ بگزار و بگزین انتظار	زین نظر وین عقل نا ہد جز دوار
منتظر را بہ زگفتن استماع	از سخنِ گورے متجوئید ارتفاع

شوق کی اک جست نے طے کر دیا قصہ تمام<sup>2</sup>  
اس زمیں و آسمان کو بے کراں سمجھا تھا میں

<sup>3</sup> 53:17, 18:

مازاع البصر وماطعی، لقد رای من آیات ربہ الکبریٰ

And when the believer reaches the last rung of the ladder of love, he himself sees these signs with his own eyes. Says Iqbāl:

*The wine I have enables me to survey the two worlds,  
But where is the man who can keep steady while witnessing  
the spectacle?<sup>1</sup>*

This point requires some elucidation.

One of the essential characteristics of Love is detachment. The lover detaches himself from everything except the Beloved. He separates himself from what is not the Beloved and eschews the world and the Hereafter. This is what is termed *khulla*. It means exclusive attachment to the Beloved. It is derived from *takhliya* and means emptying the heart of all save the Beloved. As a lover has expressed his emotions:

*Everyone in this world has some one to look after him,  
I have none but thee, and thee and thee alone.<sup>2</sup>*

Again,

*There is no other door to the path that I have to tread.  
Whither should I go from this door? Which other door is  
open to me?<sup>3</sup>*

The corollary to this abstraction is effacement, total absorption in the Beloved. Who could be the real beloved of a true believer save God? In this state of effacement or self-forgetfulness, the veil is lifted off and the lover is united with the Beloved (*waṣl*). This is called by the *ṣūfīs* 'the intensity of the consciousness of the inward' (*ghalbah-i huwa'l-bāṭin*). However, it may be noted that the lover does not become the Beloved (God), the lover does not exist at all, God exists all in all. This is what the *ṣūfīs* call 'the total passing away' (*fanā al-fanā*) or 'complete effacement':

*God stayed back, the rest passed away:  
By God! nothing exists save God.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> دو عالم را توان دیدن به بینای که من دارم

کجا چشمی که بیند آن تماشاخانه که من دارم

<sup>2</sup> هر کسی در جهان کسی دارد

من ترا دارم و ترا و ترا

<sup>3</sup> چو هیچ باب ازین در طریق رفتن نیست

کجا دویم ازین در کدام دو داریم

<sup>4</sup> Jāmī:

ماند آن الله جمله باقی رفت و الله لبس فی الوجود غیر الله



But

*Don't make any mistake. Mark:*

*He who has lost himself in God does not himself become God.<sup>1</sup>*

This is what the Prophet said:

I have sometimes a moment with God which neither the angels most near to God nor any of his messengers attained.<sup>2</sup>

This condition is not in man's power. It is a state (*hāl*) and not a stage (*maqām*).

Iqbāl speaks of this stage when he says:

*I am not a prisoner of today, yesterday or tomorrow,*

*I have neither any place nor encounter any ups and downs.<sup>3</sup>*

In his *Jāwīd Nāmāh* Iqbāl describes this stage in the words of Zarwān thus:

*Zarwān said : "I hold sway over the universe!*

*I am hidden from sight as well as am apparent.*

*I am myself Life, am Death, and the Day of Judgement.*

*I myself am Heaven and Hell and houri.*

*I have captivated this world by my charm.*

*It is through my breath this world grows older every moment.*

*That Man alone breaks through my magic*

*Who has like the Prophet a supreme moment with God.*

*If you desire that I should not come in between*

*You should devoutly utter : "I have sometimes a moment with God".<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> خیال کجی مہر این جا و بشناس

کہ ہر کہ در خدا گم شد خدا نیست

<sup>2</sup> لی مع اللہ وقت لا یسعی فیہ ملک مقرب او نبی مرسل

نہ ہا مروز اسیرم نہ بہ فردا نہ بدوش

نہ شہبہ نہ قراڑے نہ مقامے دارم

<sup>3</sup> گذشت ز دوانم جہاں را قاہرم

من حیاتم من مماتم من نشور

من حساب و دوزخ و فردوس و حور

دو طلسم من اسیر است این جہاں

از دم ہر لحظہ پھر است این جہاں

"لی مع اللہ" ہر کرا در دل نشست

آن جوانمودے طلسم من شکست

گر تو خواہی من نہ باشم درمیاں

لی مع اللہ باز خواں از مہن جاں

In the state of complete effacement, the appearances of time and space are done away with, limitations or determinations break down, the lover ceases to exist, God alone remains!

In Iqbāl's poetry, there is usually no mention of the mystic state. The reason is that it is indefinable. What happens is that an adept experiences it, but he cannot describe it in words. It may only be said:

It is a rapture in rapture, an abolishment in abolishment and an effacement in effacement.<sup>1</sup>

However, in *Jāwīd Nāmāh*, Iqbāl has briefly referred to the state of 'passing-away' (*fanā*). There he has shown how the world of similitude (*'ālam-i mithāl*) was revealed to him, and how lightness and purity was produced in his body and a clear vision was granted to him:

*I do not know what was hidden in his glance,  
This superannuated world totally vanished from my sight.  
Escaping from the world of colour and fragrance  
I entered the world of peace and quiet.  
Severing all my relations with the old world  
I got interested in the new world that I had won.  
The harm done by the world I had left was burning in my soul,  
The new world was born out of my ashes.  
My body felt lighter and my soul more alert.  
The inner eye was now open and brighter.<sup>2</sup>*

Probably in a state of this effacement Iqbāl was moved to sing these melodious notes:

*It is possible to develop a vision resembling the morning sun,  
And to convert this dark dust of our bodies into a spot which  
radiates 'Divine Light'.  
Make your vision sharper than the point of a needle,  
And dive deep into the heart of Universe!*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ain al-Qudāt, 'Ain al-ma'ānī:

هیمنان فی هیمنان طیس فی طیس، مشکو فی مشکو از نفاهم این کهن عالم ربود زادم اندر عالم بی ها و هو یک جهان تازه آمد بدست تا دگر عالم زخاکم بر دمود چشم دل بیننده و بیدار تر	در نگاه او نمی دانم چه بود مردم اندر کائنات رنگ و بو رشته من زان کهن عالم گسست از زیان عالی جانم تپید تن سبک تر گشت و جان سیار تر
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*Neither of the two worlds will be a closed book for such a vision,  
If you are gifted with such a vision you will be able to see  
through both the worlds.  
Like children do not watch nests beneath a tree,  
Take to flight and you can shoot even the Sun and the Moon.<sup>1</sup>*

In the state of effacement, usually a degree of absoluteness is produced in knowledge and will, complete unveiling (*kashf*) comes to pass, 'control' over mundane things (*taṣarrūf*) and miraculous powers begin to work. But, all this is not in the power of the 'abd as it depends on the bounty of God. What is really important in this state of effacement is nearness or proximity to God, ardent love of God, 'want' (*faqr*) and 'abdiyat, i.e., knowledge of the fact that we are all supplicants (*faqīr*) and God alone is 'All-Sufficient, the rightful Owner of all Praise'. 'Abdiyat is the highest stage of nearness or proximity to God. It is for this reason only that the Prophet was addressed as 'abd in the verse on ascension (*mi'rāj*) and this appellation denotes his closest contact and nearness to God:

Glorified be He who carried his 'abd by night.<sup>2</sup>

And he revealed unto His 'abd that which He revealed.<sup>3</sup>

By love and faith, the stage of 'abdiyat is perfected. The ecstasy, peace of mind and ataraxy thus attained are described by Iqbāl at various places in a lofty manner. Let us quote some of these lines:

*Shall I desire to be in the good graces of a king?  
A Muslim never carves out a God out of clay.*

چو خورشید سحر پیدا نگاه می توان کردن<sup>1</sup>  
همین خاک سیه را جلوه گاه می توان کردن  
نگاه خویش را از نوک سوزن قیام تو گردان  
چو چوهر در دل آئیند راه می توان کردن  
نه این عالم حجاب او را، نه آن عالم نقاب او را  
اگر تاب نظر داری نگاه می توان کردن  
تو در زیر درختان همچو طنائان آشیان بینی  
به پادشاه آ که صید مهر و ماه می توان کردن

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān 17:1:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 53:10:

فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى

*The heart that beats in my breast and has no desire what-  
soever,  
Can initiate a beggar into the ways of a king!  
Even if the Sun advances towards me,  
I shall wave it aside in my total indifference.<sup>1</sup>*

Again,

*I am a free man led by Love alone!  
Love rules over me, intellect serves me!  
The hectic activity you see around is the result of my cup  
of wine,  
This very cup is my evening star and it alone is a full  
moon to me.  
O thou world of colour and fragrance, how long can I stick  
to thee?  
Death is thine end and Love is mine.  
He (God) is manifest as well as latent in my heart,  
Figure out for yourself who I am?<sup>2</sup>*

To sum up, according to its nature or origin finite intellect, like other organs of senses, is a servant of our day today life, "is an appendage to the faculty of action." It provides means for the preservation of life; it is by nature incapable of knowing the essence of Reality. When it is subjected to Universal Reason or Divine Knowledge, faith takes birth. As a corollary of faith ardent love for God is

<sup>1</sup> ز سلطان کدم آرزوئے نگاه  
مسلمانم از گل نه سازم اله  
گدا را دهد شیوہ بادشاہ  
دل بے نیازے کہ در سہلہ دارم  
اگر آفتابے سوئے من خرامد  
بشوخی بگردانم او را زراہ

<sup>2</sup> من بندہٴ آزادم عشق است امام من  
عشق است امام من عقل است غلام من  
ہنگامتہٴ این مصفل از گردش جام من  
این کوکب شام من این ماہ تمام من  
اے عالم رنگ و بو این صحبت ماتا چلد  
مرگ است دوام تو عشق است دوام من  
پیدا بضمیرم او پندہاں بضمیرم  
این است مقام او درباب مقام من

produced. This is established by the *Qur'ān*.

Those who believe are overflowing in their love for God.<sup>1</sup>

Love creates force in work, broadens the vision, gives peace and equanimity to the mind and fills the heart with ecstasy. Thus, one attains the highest stage of Divine Proximity. Residing in this world only, one enters into Heaven, and is thus addressed:

Enter thou among my bondsmen! Enter thou my Garden!<sup>2</sup>

As soon as his state of *'abdiyyat* is actualized, the *'abd* steps into the Heaven of *Dhāt* (the Essence). Being closely placed to the fountain of the Nearness of God, he is always intoxicated with the wine of Love:

A spring whence those brought near to God drink.<sup>3</sup>

This indeed is the bliss of life in this world and in the Hereafter.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2:165:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

<sup>2</sup> *Qur'ān* 89:28:

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي فَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ مِنَ الْمَقْرُونِ

بِوَدِّ الْعَيْشِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

## THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN IQBĀL'S PHILOSOPHY

M. RAFIQUE

The problem of suffering has also been referred to as the problem of evil in the history of human thought. Ever since man began to reflect over God, soul and universe, this problem has agitated the minds of both the philosopher and the religious man alike. Some thinkers have reckoned the fact of positive presence of suffering in the universe. Others have tended to regard it as simply superficial, all the world being the pulsation of one divine Delight. Still others have regarded this world and all it contains as unreal and illusory. Similarly, the solutions which have been suggested are also varied. Some thinkers stand for the struggle with the evil forces and believe in man's capacity to conquer these forces in the long run. These thinkers may be termed as meliorists or pragmatists. Others think that a right knowledge about God, man and universe will solve this problem automatically. They may be termed as optimists. Still others seek the solution of the problem in the cessation of desires and the escape from the world. They may be termed as pessimists.

All the great religions of the world have got their own characteristic way of dealing with this problem of suffering. In this paper, I wish to present the Islamic point of view, particularly as represented by Muḥammad Iqbāl.

At the very outset, let us see the meaning which the word 'suffering' carries with it. It includes two types of suffering:

- i. Physical suffering, such as storms, earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines, diseases, and death;
- ii. Suffering born of man's own conduct, such as mental suffering, frustration, pangs of repentance, the sense of failure and the sufferings born of wars, strifes and discords

Next we have to see how the problem poses itself before man. The religious man who possesses a philosophical temperament, or a philosopher who possesses a religious bent of mind, naturally finds the goodness and perfection of God as conflicting with the presence of evil in the world. He asks: Is the evil something alien and

external to God? If so, being Omnipotent, why does he not root out the evil which is just opposed to His essence and thus save man from much suffering? Or else, is He Himself the creator of the evil? If so, what can be the purpose of God in its creation?

Let us now proceed to understand the problem in the framework of Islam. According to Islam, the world and all it contains is real and possesses positive existence. And so is the case with the presence of suffering in this world. Iqbāl finds the fact of moral and physical evil standing out prominently in the life of Nature and he sees something terribly positive about it.

Now, at this stage, two points figure out very prominently. First, according to the *Qur'ān*, the world is not a cursed place where the elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned. On the contrary, the *Qur'ān* regards the earth to be the 'dwelling place' of man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which he ought to be grateful to God. Thus the *Qur'ān* says:

And we have established you on the earth and given therein support of life. How little do ye give thanks.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, whatever evil and suffering we find in the world is not the result of the original sin of Adam which may be infecting all the generations of man, past, present and future. The *Qur'ān* is very clear on this point. It repeatedly emphasizes that every man will be held responsible for only that which he himself has done, and no man will share the burden of the sins of others.

Man is in the real world, and there exists suffering actually in the world he lives in. Now the problem is how to explain this presence of suffering. Here it may be interesting to note Iqbāl's interpretation of the legend of the fall of man referred to in the Old Testament as well as the *Qur'ān*. For, he thinks, it will give some clue to the understanding of the problem of suffering. Iqbāl has maintained that the legend of the fall of Adam from the paradise mentioned in the *Qur'ān* has not been used to describe the first appearance of man on the surface of the earth. According to him, its "purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of free self, capable of doubt and disobedience".<sup>2</sup> Thus Adam's first disobedience of

<sup>1</sup> *Qur'ān* 7 : 9.

<sup>2</sup> Iqbāl, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 85.

God marks the conscious realization of the possession of freedom of will to choose good or evil. Free personality is, according to the *Qur'ān*, God's trust with man. Now it is upto him to use this trust rightly or wrongly. The *Qur'ān* makes its position clear regarding good and evil. It says:

And for trial will we test you with evil and with good.<sup>1</sup>

Dealing with the legend in question, Iqbāl further remarks that the word 'Adam' has not been used to describe a particular concrete individual but the whole human race. His view is that it is highly probable that this legened "arose out of the primitive man's desire to explain to himself the infinite misery of his plight in an uncongenial environment, which abounded in disease and death and obstructed him on all sides in his endeavour to maintain himself."<sup>2</sup>

According to Iqbāl, the *Qur'ān* has split the episode of the fall of Adam into two. The first episode relates simply to the 'tree' and the other relates to the 'tree of eternity' and the 'Kingdom that faileth not'. The first episode is mentioned in the 7th and the second in the 20th *sūra* of the *Qur'ān*. Interpreting the first episode, Iqbāl, quoting the testimony of H. P. Blavatski, author of *The Secret Doctrine*, says:

With the ancients the tree was a cryptic symbol for occult knowledge. Adam was forbidden to taste the fruit of this tree obviously because his finitude as a self, his sense equipment and his intellectual faculties, were, on the whole, attuned to a different type of knowledge, the type of knowledge which necessitates the toil of patient observation and admits only of slow accumulation.<sup>3</sup>

On the advice of Satan, he sought a short cut to knowlege by tasting the fruit. Iqbāl thinks, therefore, that the only way to correct this tendency was to place him in an enviroment which, however painful, was better suited to the unfolding of his intellectual faculties.

Consequently, Adam was sent to the painful physical environment so that man may have the joy of perpetual growth and expansion through enlarging the possibilities of his knowledge which enriches by the method of trial and error.

According to Iqbāl, the purpose of the second episode is to describe man's disire to attain immortality through sexual reproduc-

<sup>1</sup> *Qur'ān*, 21 : 35.

<sup>2</sup> Iqbāl, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 87.



tion. It is as if life says to death: "If you sweep away one generation of living things, I will produce another." However, due to the emergence of multitudinous individualities, there issues forth an awful struggle for existence. Hence Iqbāl holds the view that this "mutual conflict of opposing individualities is the world pain which both illuminates and darkens the temporal career of life".<sup>1</sup> The sufferings and other evils are, according to him, the necessary accompaniment of the finitude of our 'self'. Iqbāl says that the *Qur'ān* regards true manhood as consisting in 'patience under ills and hardships'.

It has become now clear to us that there is the positive existence of suffering in the world. As to the reason of its presence, Iqbāl says that at the present stage of human evolution, we cannot fully understand the purpose of the presence of suffering. However, he thinks that there can be no meaning behind it except that the driving power of suffering provides man with a discipline so that his self may become hardened and fortified against a possible dissolution. Iqbāl's conclusion is this:

We cannot understand the full import of the great cosmic forces which work havoc, and at the same time sustain and amplify life. The teaching of the *Qur'ān*, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognizes a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil.<sup>2</sup>

The above idea finds ample expression throughout Iqbāl's poetry. He defines life in his poems as a continuous restlessness, constant burning, ceaseless quest and a wish to advance on the journey without longing for destination. For him, Satan represents the presence of suffering and evil in the world. Satan stimulates activity and thus promotes the abundance of life. Iqbāl maintains that when life is hedged in with sufferings and difficulties, it struggles to survive and thus becomes strong and fortified. Hence in his poetry Iqbāl has not condemned Satan for the evils and sufferings which he brings in the universe. For, in his absence, there would have been no opposing forces which put obstacles in the way of life. Iqbāl welcomes all the difficulties, dangers, sufferings and grief. Thus in his poem *Taṣḥīr-i fīrat*, Satan admonishes Adam:

*Thou doth not know yet that the love dies having achieved  
the union.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

*What is life everlasting?*

*It is ceaseless burning.<sup>1</sup>*

Elsewhere, Iqbāl has said:

*If you want to live, live in dangers.<sup>2</sup>*

Iqbāl thinks that as there was no work to do in the heavens, the life of Adam was very monotonous. Satan, the symbol of active life, brought him down on the earth full of pain and suffering. Once having come in this unfavourable environment, man has got the mission of conquering the evil forces and mastering the Nature to remould it nearer to his heart's desires. However, Iqbāl's Satan finds that man is very weak and frail and does too readily surrender himself before his crafts. Hence in *Jāwīd nāmāh*, he complains to God that he is spoiled due to this weak-spirited man. He says :

*O God: Give me a strong worshipper of the Truth (i.e., God),  
So that I may enjoy the pleasure of defeat.<sup>3</sup>*

Thus we can see that Iqbāl holds the view that the evolution of life cannot be complete without its struggle with the forces which negate and oppose it. These negative forces are necessary and vital. They are to be conquered and mastered. The struggle with the evil forces will make the self strong and fortified and thus save it from dissolution at the time of death.

In the end, let us see Iqbāl's glorification of man who turned the adverse circumstances to his advantage. In the following verses Iqbāl makes man address God thus:

*Thou created darkness, I created lamp.  
Thou created earth, I created goblet.  
Thou created wilderness, mountains and forests,  
I created gardens, parks and greeneries.*

<sup>1</sup> *Payām-i mashriq*, p. 99:

تو نہ شناسی ہلوز، شوق بمیرد ز وصل  
چیست حیات دوام، سوختن ناتمام

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143:

اگر خواہی حیات اندر خطر زی

<sup>3</sup> *Jāwīd nāmāh*, pp 160-61.

اے خدا یک زندہ مرد حق پرست  
لدتے شاید کہ یابم دو شکست

*I am one who makes mirror out of stone.*

*I am one who draws honey out of poison.<sup>1</sup>*

It is essential for man, therefore, according to Iqbāl, to adopt the melioristic or pragmatic attitude towards the problem of suffering, otherwise he cannot adjust himself in a world where evil forces threaten man's life, and turn the forces of Nature to the welfare of humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Payām-i mashriq*, p. 132.

نو شب آفریدی چراغ آفریدم  
 سبّال آفریدی ایّاغ آفریدم  
 بیابان و کھسار و داغ آفریدی  
 خرابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدم  
 من آنم که از سنگ آئینه سازم  
 من آنم که از زهر نو شیشه سازم

## IQBĀL AND THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

ABBADULLAH FARUQI

The doctrine of transmigration of soul maintains that human beings are reborn after their death to atone for their sins and reap the fruits of their past deeds. According to this theory the individual was torn away from the divine mind in the beginning of his existence, and in order to reach his destination he has to be reincarnated. Consequently, man as an individual soul enters body many times before it reaches its perfection, which means his submergence into the Universal Soul. In other words, it means the end of individual existence, and it is attained when all desires of lower self are finally dead. This theory is based on the Law of Karma, which, in its simple terms, states that no human deed, whether good or evil, is without effect. "Man is punished by his sins and not for his sins." The individual soul, as it is held by the exponents of this theory, is a fragment of the Universal Soul, and is, therefore, imperishable. The universe in which the individual soul is placed is a field of becoming and as such it is but relative reality or *maya*. The human soul takes its abode in the body that is best suited to it.

The idea of the transmigration of the soul is not confined to India. It has been prevalent in several countries. The Pythagorean school taught this doctrine, and it seems to have been popular amongst the Druids. It is found in the English poetry. Says John Masfield:

*I hold that when a person dies  
His soul returns again to earth:  
Arrayed in some new flesh, disguise,  
Another mother gives him birth.  
With sturdier limbs and brighter brains  
The old soul takes the road again.*

The same idea is expressed by Tennyson:

*As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood  
And ebb into a former life or seem  
To lapse far back in a confused dream  
To states of mystical similitude,*

Robert Browning also gives expression to the same idea:

*I claim you still, for my own love's sake;  
Delayed it may be for more lives yet;  
Through worlds, I shall traverse, not a few;  
Much is to learn and much to forget.  
Ere the time becomes for taking you.*

It may be pointed out here that some scholars have cited certain verses of Rūmī which, they think, indicate that he believed in the doctrine of rebirth. Here are a few of such verses:

*I died from the inorganic realm and became a plant,  
Then I died from the plant life and became an animal.  
Dying from animality I became a man,  
So why should I be afraid of becoming anything less through  
another death?*

*In the next step I shall die from humanity  
To develop wings like the angels.  
Then again I shall sacrifice my angelic self  
And become that which cannot enter imagination.  
Then I become non-existent when the divine organ  
Strikes the note "We are to return unto Him."<sup>1</sup>*

One finds similar verses by Maḥmūd Shabistārī:

*Every time a new world comes into existence,  
And the earth and sky assume a new shape.  
Nothing endures in this universe for more than a few  
moments.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Mathnavī*: 3 : 1-3, 5, 6:

از جمادی مردم و نامی شدم  
وز نما مردم به حیوان سر زدم  
مردم از حیوانی و آدم شدم  
پس چه ترسم کے زمردین کم شدم  
حمله دیگر بمهرم از بشر  
تا بر آدم از ملائک ہال و پز  
بار دیگر از ملک قریاں شوم  
آنچه اندر وہم ناید آن شوم  
پس عدم کردم عدم چوں اوقل  
گویدم کانا الہ و اجعون

*The very moment a thing passes away it reappears.  
But this cycle of life and death is not Resurrection,  
For this constitutes the day of action while that the Day  
of Judgment.<sup>1</sup>*

What Rūmī really means is the transmutation of the species in the process of natural development—something quite different from reincarnation.

Iqbāl, who is deeply inspired by the teachings of the *Qurʾān*, rejects the doctrine of reincarnation as un-Islamic. The *Qurʾān* states that the evil-doers will ask on the Day of Judgment to be sent back in the world, but God will reply in the negative, saying that they could not profit by the means at their disposal, and so long as their natures remain unchanged, they are bound to fail in these very circumstances. When the means of rectification remain the same and the nature of man is unchanged, there is no reason to expect results better than what has ever been experienced. Following this, Iqbāl maintains that man's latent capacities and inner possibilities can never be changed. His perfection lies, therefore, in the development of his natural tendencies and potentialities. The ego develops into strong powerful personality by desires and aspirations, and not by the suppression of desires, as the exponents of the theory of reincarnation would have us believe. Says Iqbāl:

*Desire is the noose for hunting ideals,  
A binder of the book of deeds.  
Negation of desire is death to the living  
Even as absence of burning extinguishes the flames.  
Why does the mind strive after new discoveries and scale  
the heavens?  
Do you realize whose wonderous deed it is?*

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<sup>1</sup> *Gulshān-i rāz: i jadīd:*

دگر بارے شوں پیدا چہانے  
بہر لحظہ زمیں و آسمانے  
درو چہیزے دو ساعت می نیاید  
دراں لحظہ کہ می میرد بڑائید  
و لیکن طامتہ الکبریٰ نہ این است  
کہ این یوم العمل و آن یوم دین است

*'Tis desire that enriches life.  
And the intellect is a child of its womb.<sup>1</sup>*

Desires presuppose an environment. The ego must act and react against the environment, so as to be able to achieve perfection. Man has certainly the power to reshape the environment according to his will:

*He asked, "Is my world attuned to thee?"  
"No," said I. "Go and shatter it to pieces," said He.<sup>2</sup>*

According to Iqbāl, perfect man is one who comes nearest to God by absorbing God Himself in his ego, not one who is finally absorbed in God. Life, thus, according to Iqbāl, is a forward assimilative movement. It removes obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals. Nature is the greatest obstacle in his life. Yet, Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves. Therefore Iqbāl says that the universe is real; it is not *maya* or illusion. Man should, therefore, strive to overcome nature and conquer the environment in which he lives. The conquest of nature will bring him close to God, and this according to Iqbāl constitutes the ideal of life. Iqbāl regards the theory of reincarnation defective in the sense that it conflicts with the 'philosophy of life'. In other words, it conflicts with the harmonious development of the individual. "Islam," says Iqbāl, "is not a departmental affair, it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action. It is the expression of the whole man." It is not a religion in the ordinary sense of the word, it is a philosophy of life which seeks to ensure the harmonious

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<sup>1</sup> آرزو صید مقاصد را کمتد  
دفعه افعال را شیرازه بلد  
زنده را نفی تمنا مرده کرد  
شعله را نقصان سوز افسرده کرد  
عقل ندوت کوش و گردن تاز چیست  
هیچ می دانی که این اعتبار چیست  
زندگی سرمایه دار از آرزوست  
عقل از زائندگان بطن اوست  
<sup>2</sup> گفتند جهان ما آیا به تو می سازد  
گفتم که نه می سازد، گفتند که بدو هم زن

development of the individual and transformation of humanity. The theory of reincarnation attaches a great importance to the pleasures of worldly life. For Iqbāl, on the other hand, the worldly pleasures are neither the stepping-stone into the ultimate goal of man, nor the miseries and afflictions are stumbling stones in the way of the ultimate end. The varying circumstances, through which man is made to pass, are instruments in calling his latent faculties into play and bringing them to perfection. God, being the Creator, knows how and when man's power and adaptabilities can best thrive and produce the best possible results. Thus mere difference in power and faculties can afford no ground for injustice, particularly when everyone feels best placed and has been assigned position most becoming and suitable to his innate tendencies and capacities. Iqbāl points out that the status of everybody affords the best ground for him for the development and consummation of his inborn faculties and powers. Hence difference of power does not mean anything, and pleasure and pain are only the means and not the end of life. Iqbāl further maintains vigorously that this difference is a source of blessing for mankind and is not determined by one's past deeds, good or bad. It is urgently required, for it affords stimulus for progress and an impetus to get on. Thus, the world without any sort of difference will be nothing but a dull monotony, a death-like inertia, a terribly sickening uniformity and a dead, listless coma all over the face of the earth. But for this diversity, all human progress, moral or spiritual, will be at a deadlock. In the absence of any incentive to improvement, all energies of mankind will be dwarfed, faculties chilled, powers crippled, potentialities stifled and activities paralysed.

Thus, inactivity according to Iqbāl is the chief cause of physical deformity, ugliness, retrogression and disintegration of human personality.

The most serious objection against this theory is that it involves co-eternity of soul and matter with God and the idea of temporary salvation. The co-eternity of matter and soul with God divests Him of all His powers and attributes. He is no longer a Creator and no more an All-knowing and All-wise Being. His Godhood depends on matter and soul. A dependant God is surely a contradiction in term. Temporary salvation (*i. e.*, submergence of the finite with the infinite soul) brings us face to face with a serious objection. For self-annihilation is not the aim of life. According to Iqbāl, men live



for the ideals, which are social, moral and divine. According to him, the material world is not an end but a stepping-stone for the higher spiritual ideal. This must, therefore, be conquered, and in order to conquer it, self-affirmation rather than self-negation should be the aim of life. Thus, salvation means the state of nearness to God, the state of highest bliss. One cannot attain to the blissful proximity to the Divine Being, unless all of one's evil tendencies and crooked inclinations die out once for all. In this way, when all the powers and faculties of man get to the highest stage of development, the possibilities of retrogression and relapses to the *status quo ante* become extinct. Iqbāl, therefore, contends that man is required by the Almighty to make use of all the means placed at his disposal for the development of his faculties and removal of weaknesses, so as to be able to attain spiritual contentment. This state is a state of bliss and is achieved when a man is able to concentrate all his affection in God, so that earthly loves become so many nullities and all worldly allurements so much humbug for him. It is at this stage of culminating-point of love that man is able to enjoy the crowning glory. The *Qur'ān* makes reference to his blissful state of salvation (*i. e.*, the state of proximity to God) which enables man to enter paradise:

O soul that art at rest, return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing, so enter among My servants, and enter My Garden.<sup>1</sup>

Again, according to the doctrine of reincarnation, becoming is the Karma's agent of rebirth. Birth is caused by becoming, while becoming is caused by one's wicked deeds. Therefore man is punished by his sins and not for his sins. Iqbāl rejects this idea and holds that whatever the nature of the punishment, the reformatory element must predominate for the amelioration of mankind. God has the correction of mankind in view, in the award of punishment. It takes the form of affliction, but afflictions are not always punitive; sometimes they are free from penal element. God says in the *Qur'ān*:

Who, when a misfortune befalls them say:  
Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall return.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 89:26-30;

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمَطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً  
فَاَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

<sup>2</sup> 2:156;

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

In view of this idea, Iqbāl also contends that it is after passing through tests and trials of affliction that men become more closely wedded to God than they were before and their connexion with Him becomes strong and durable. Says he:

Fear not the opposing violent wind, O eagle,  
For it blows to lift thee higher.<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet of Islam bore with unshakable fortitude and super-human patience all the persecutions and sufferings at the hands of the Mecceans for thirteen long years and as a result he was the most perfect man. Similarly, every upright man has had to endure certain amount of hardship for the perfection of his spiritual and moral side. Yet there are instances of punishment in penal sense, in the form of afflictions, which support the working of the law of *karma* to some extent. The following verse of the *Qur'ān* illustrates the point:

And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is on account of what  
your hands have wrought and He pardons much.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, every action of man, according to this verse, is capable of bearing a certain result and whoever commits bad deed must reap bitter fruit. Man is fully responsible for his actions, for God has implanted in him a knowledge of good and evil. He has sent prophets with clear warnings and unerring directions for his guidance. But if man commits spiritual suicide by wilful transgression, he will have to face chastisement through his own inequities. Thus there is no denying the fact that afflictions are sometimes the result of one's own misdeeds. But it is wrong to maintain that man is *karma* incarnate, i. e., he always becomes according to what he does and his afflictions are always the result of his misdeeds. For sometimes punishments are directed to the betterment of mankind and are not always the direct result of their own deeds. Even if a man is not purged of all evils, he can attain salvation or proximity to God by His grace.

*Nirvana* is a state of perfect felicity and of contentment. But Iqbāl interprets this state of contentment in a different manner. According to him, whenever a believer advances towards God, he not

تندی باد مخالف سے نہ گھبرا اے عقاب<sup>1</sup>  
یہ تو چلی ہے تجھے اُونچا اُڑانے کیلئے

<sup>2</sup> 42:30:

وما اصابکم من مصیبة فیما کسبت ایدیکم

only resigns himself to His will but takes delight in His work and whatever comes from Him is not only acceptable to him, but entirely pleasing to him. When a man centres all his hopes and affections in Allah, then and only then God's responsive love manifests itself in full measure. Iqbāl therefore says that a state of perfect felicity can be enjoyed only when a believer gives himself entirely to the divine ends. Those whose evil tendencies remain pent up with them remain in a constant state of mental agony, which constitutes hell for them. The *Qur'ān* says:

Indeed hell encompasses the infidels in this world.<sup>1</sup>

To conclude, according to Iqbāl salvation lies in faith and good actions. Good actions will surely bring about progress in the spiritual and material world according to the immutable laws of God. Without faith, all the good works done in this world go in vain and will bear no fruit. Iqbāl's perfect man is endowed with powers to shatter the sorry scheme of this universe and to overcome all the difficulties of life:

*The man of strong character who is master for himself  
Will find the fortune complaisant.  
If the world does not comply with his humour,  
He will try the hazard of war with the heavens.  
He will dig up the foundations of the universe,  
And cast its atoms into a new world.  
He will subvert the course of time  
And wreck the azure firmament.  
He knows the secrets of parts and wholes  
That they exist in the world by Divine Command  
When he pitches the tent in the wide world.  
He rolls up this ancient carpet.  
His genius abounds with life and desires to manifest itself.  
He will bring another world into existence.  
A hundred worlds like this world of parts and whole  
Spring up like roses from the seeds of his imagination.  
He makes every raw nature ripe;  
He puts the idols out of the sanctuary.*

<sup>1</sup> *Qur'ān* 29:54:

وَأَن جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

*Heart-strings give forth music at his touch.  
He wakes and sleeps for God alone.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Asrār wa rumūz:*

مردن خود دارے کہ باشد پختہ کار  
با مزاج او بسازد روزگار  
گر نہ سازد با مزاج او جہاں  
می شود جنگ آزما یا آسمان  
بر کند بقیہ موجودات را  
می دهد ترکیب نو ذرات را  
گردش ایام را برہم زند  
چرخ نہلی قام را برہم زند  
از رموز جزو کل آگاہ بود  
در جہاں قائم بامر اللہ بود  
خیمہ چون در وسعت عالم زند  
این بساط کہنہ را برہم زند  
فطرتش معمور و می خواہد نمود  
عالمی دیگر بیدار در وجود  
صد جہاں مثل جہان جزو کل  
روید از کشت خیال او چو گل  
پختہ سازد فطرت ہر خام را  
از حرم بہروں کشد اصنام را  
نغمہ ز تار دل از مضراب او  
بہر حق بیداری او خواب او

## ON TRANSLATING IQBĀL

S. A. VAHID

Writing in that excellent book, *On Translation*, Dudley Fitts has remarked: "The way of the translator is hard, but it need not be desperate."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the difficulties of the task literary men appear now and then who undertake the translation of great works in prose as well as poetry from one language into another, and these translations are read by students with great pleasure. It must be remembered that a good translation involves two processes at the same time: it is, first, a reliving of the author's creative experience, and, secondly, the transmitting of something of that experience to others. It is obvious that this twofold task can be accomplished only by competent translators.

Mr Savory gives in his book<sup>2</sup> a list of twelve propositions which should govern the craft of a translator. On closer analysis these twelve propositions can be reduced to the two given below:

- i. *Should a translation be literal first and literary afterwards? Or the other way round?*
- ii. *Has the translator done his job if he has expressed the sense of his original in any style or idiom he chooses to employ? Or is he bound in some way to represent the style and idiom of his original?*

The best answer to these pertinent questions is provided by the Oxford Scholar, R. A. Knox, who in his Sheldonian Lecture of 1957, said: "Books are meant to be read and the first quality of a book is that people shall read it and want to go on reading it. You have done a disservice to your original if the reader puts your translation down almost at once saying to himself: 'I expect this stuff would be rather fine, if one knew Greek!' You have got to make him say: 'This is fine, whatever sacrifice of literalness it may involve.'" Thus

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<sup>1</sup> *On Translation*, ed. by R.A. Bowers. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> *The Art of Translation*. London, 1957.

we come to the conclusion that every translation must be literary first and literal afterwards, with the proviso that it must not fail to express the author's meaning.

This is true of translations in general, but when we come to translating poetry in particular, the difficulty of maintaining the delicate balance between the literary and the literal increases manifold. Jackson Matthews has remarked: "Poetry is a kind of writing that uses all the resources of language. It is involved bodily in the particular language of which it is made, and does not evolve out of it, as prose tries to do and seems to do. Painters, sculptors and musicians can be understood beyond the borders of their own country, but a poet, as Valery says, is never profoundly, intimately, and completely understood and felt but by his own people; he is inseparable from the speech of his nation. The prose writer, the novelist, the philosopher can be translated and often are, without too much damage. But to the poet belongs the privilege and inevitable disadvantage that his work cannot be translated either into prose or into a foreign language. A true poet is strictly untranslatable."<sup>1</sup> All that Valery has written deserves our attention; still we know that thousands and thousands of people, all over the world, have enjoyed and are enjoying immensely reading Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in translation. It is certainly true that to appreciate any poet properly we must be able to read him in original yet an average man cannot master so many languages, and so we all have to depend to a great extent on translation.

Once we decide to translate poetry the question arises whether it should be translated into prose or into verse. In this connexion we have the following remarks of Prof. R. A. Nicholson whose translations of *Selected Poems from Dīwānī Shamsi Tabrīz* have won praise from all critics. He says: "My translation seems to reconcile the claims of accuracy and art; it is therefore in prose. Obviously English verse cannot convey the full sense of Oriental poetry without lapsing into grotesque doggerel; the translator must either profess a general adherence to his author's meaning or, rising above the latter, he must catch the elusive spirit of his original, and reproduce

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<sup>1</sup> 'Third Thoughts on Translating Poetry' by Jackson Matthews in *On Translation*.

it in a worthy form. Of this, the highest and rarest kind of translation, Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* is a classic."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, we have some excellent translations into verse. Even Nicholson has translated several Arabic and Persian poems into verse with great success and effect. It is certainly true that if we limit translation to verse the number of translators, not very large in any case, will be reduced still further; because there are not many who can write good verse or for that matter verse of any kind. While it can be said that translations into verse can display the poetic qualities of the original in a better degree, translations into prose can also be successful in the hands of artists. We can safely agree with Jackson Matthews when he says: "Could it be that the antique question, should verse be translated into verse or into prose, has found its answer: both."<sup>2</sup>

Stephen Spender has remarked: "A poet's aim, as a translator, should not be absolute accuracy but to return to the source of the poet's inspiration and create a parallel poem in the English language." In this connexion we are reminded of a story about Iqbāl told by Dr M.D. Taseer. Dr Taseer says that whenever Iqbāl wanted any of his verses translated into English he used to ask him to do it. Once Taseer told Iqbāl that he himself was the best person to translate his own poetry. Upon this Iqbāl remarked: "When I start translating into English any of my poems, the translation becomes a new poem, and this is what a translator should avoid." So far Iqbāl has been translated into Russian, German, Czech, Italian, French and English amongst the European languages and into Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Indonesian, Chinese and Bengali amongst the Eastern languages. It is time to survey these translations, especially those in the European languages, and see if the existing translations offer some guidance for future work. Let us start with the translations into English.

In English, we have the following translations of Iqbāl:

Translation of *Asrār-i khūdī* by R. A. Nicholson.

Translation of *Rumūz-i bikhūdī* by A. J. Arberry.

Translation of the *Rubā'īs* of *Payām-i mashriq* by A. J. Arberry.

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Poems from Diwānī Shamsī Tabrīz*, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Translation of the *Ghazals* of *Zabūr-i ʿajam* by A. J. Arberry.

Translations of *Jāvid nāmāh* by Maḥmūd Aḥmad and A. J. Arberry.

Translation of *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* and

*Bandagī nāmāh* by Bashīr Aḥmad Dār.

Translation of Selections from Iqbāl by Kiernan.

Translations of *Shikwah* and *Jawāb-i shikwah* by A. J. Arberry  
and Altaf Husain, and of *Khiṭr-i rāh* by Niyāz.

Of these, the translations of *Asrār-i khūdī* and *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* are in prose, while the others are in verse. The translation of *Asrār-i khūdī* is by that great orientalist, R. A. Nicholson, well-known as Rūmī's translator. His translations of Rūmī's *ghazals* cannot be surpassed in beauty and grandeur. Yet it must be admitted that his translation of *Asrār-i khūdī* is lacking in these qualities. On the whole it is correct and dignified, but the fire and passion of the original are missing. Where the original has lyrical fervour it is only faintly reflected in the translation, and perhaps it can be said that, taken as a whole, the translation is rather insipid. The original translation even contained many mistakes. Iqbāl himself pointed out most of these. Those who possess the first edition of the translation can see that some of the mistakes made by the translator were ridiculous. In line 134 Iqbāl says:

بر سر بازار بشکن شیشه را

Nicholson has translated this as

*Break the bottles in the bazar.*

Iqbāl wrote to Nicholson: "شیشه بر سر بازار شکستن" is an idiom which means to disclose the secret." Still Nicholson did not correct the translation.

In line 446 Iqbāl says:

صورت طفلان ز نه مرکب کنی

Nicholson translated this as

*And ride like children on a woman's back.*

Iqbāl corrected this as below:

*And ride like children on a reed.*

Nicholson accepted this correction in the revised edition. When a record of the mistakes pointed out by Iqbāl came into the hands of



Prof. A. J. Arberry he wrote: "The most arresting fact which emerged from the study of this new material was the extreme difficulty of reading a correct interpretation of many passages in Iqbāl's poetry. Professor Nicholson was at the height of his great powers when he made his translation of the *Asrār-i khūdī*; it was shortly after the completion of this task that he began work on the *Mathnavī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, a labour which occupied the rest of his life and crowned his splendid achievements in the field of Oriental studies. All who put their hands to translating Iqbāl may therefore well feel humbled, when they consider how many times the inner sense of his poetry escaped Prof. Nicholson's deep and careful scholarship. But they may well rejoice that fortune has preserved this unique example of Iqbāl's exegesis of his own writings; by studying carefully the material which is assembled in these pages, the future worker in this field will find much to assist his undertaking."<sup>1</sup>

As remarked above, in spite of occasional incorrect renderings, the translation is beautiful in places, as will be seen in the following example. Describing the advent of the Perfect Man, Iqbāl says :

اے سوارِ اشہبِ دورانِ بیا	اے فروغِ دیدہٴ امکانِ بیا
رونقِ ہلکامۂ ایجاد شو	در سوادِ دیدہٴ آبد شو
شروشِ اقوامِ را خاموش کن	نغمہٴ خودِ را بہشتِ گوش کن
خیز و قانونِ اخوت ساز دہ	جامِ صہبائے محبتِ باز دہ
باز در عالمِ بیمارِ ایامِ صلح	جنگجویانِ را بدہٴ پیغامِ صلح

These lines have been translated by Nicholson as below:

*Appear, O rider of Destiny!*  
*Appear, O light of the dark realm of change!*  
*Illumine the scene of existence,*  
*Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!*  
*Silence the noise of the nations,*  
*Imparadise our ears with thy music!*  
*Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,*  
*Give us back the cup of the wine of love!*  
*Bring once more days of peace to the world*  
*Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!*

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, *Notes on Iqbāl's Asrār-i khūdī*,

Unfortunately the translation of the third verse is not correct. '*Shūrish*' has been translated as 'noise.' The proper word is 'tumult.' One feels tempted to give another example. Praying for a confidant Iqbāl says:

شمع را تنها تهیدن سهل نیست      آه یک پروانه من اهل نیست  
انتظار غمگسارے تا کجا      جستجوئے راز دارے تا کجا  
ایں اصانت باز گھر از سیلہ ام      خار جوهر برکش از آئینہ ام  
یا صا یک ہمدہ دیرینہ دہ      عشق عالم سوز را آئینہ دہ

These lines are translated as below:

*It is not easy for the candle to throb alone:  
Ah, is there no moth worthy of me?  
How long shall I wait for one to share my grief?  
How long must I search for confidant?  
Take back what thou hast put in my breast,  
Remove the stabbing radiance from my mirror.  
Or give me one old comrade  
To be the mirror of mine all-burning love!*

As will be noticed the above translation is literary as well as literal.

Prof. Arberry has translated the quatrains contained in *Payām-i mashriq* into verse and published them under the title *The Tulip of Sinai*. On the whole the translations are excellent, but in some cases the learned translator has missed the sense of the original. For instance, there is Iqbāl's *rubā'ī*:

سکر می گفت بلبل باغبان را      دریں گل جز نہال غم نگہوں  
بہ پیروی می رسد خار بہایان      ولے گل چوں جوان گیرد بمیرد

Prof. Arberry has translated this as below:

*At dawn the Bulbul to the gardener spoke:  
'Within this clay the roots of sorrow lie—  
The desert thorn thrives on till it is old,  
The rose blossoms in youth, that it may die.'*

As regards his translation of *Rumūz-i bīkhūdī*, Arberry says: "In casting the translation in the form of unrhymed verse—the original is written in rhyming couplets—I have tried, while seeking strict fidelity to the meaning, to convey something of the poetical flavour of the Persian model."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, p. xvii. London, 1953.

In spite of all his scholarship and the care he took to understand and interpret Iqbāl correctly, mistakes are not uncommon. For example, let us see the translation of these verses:

تاید اسلامیاں ہاروں رشید      آنکہ نقفور آب تیغ او چشید  
گفت مالک را کہ اے مولائے قوم      روشن از خاک درت سیمائے قوم  
اے نو! پرداز کلزار حدیث      از تو خواہم درس اسرار حدیث

*Harun Rashid, that captain of the Faith  
Whose blade to Nicephor of Byzance proved  
A deadly potion, unto Malik spoke  
Upon this fashion: "Master of my folk  
The dust before whose door illuminates  
My people's brow, melodious nightingale  
Carrolling mid the roses of good words,  
I am desirous to be taught by thee  
The secrets of those words."*<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the learned translator has failed to understand the meaning of 'hadīth'. The translation of *Zabūr-i 'ajam*—the *ghazal* portion—is in graceful and eloquent English. The translation of a portion of a *ghazal* is given below by way of example:

زمستان را سر آمد روزگار      نواہا زندہ شد در شاخساران  
گلان را رنگ و نم بخشد ہواہا      کہ می آید زطرب چوئباران  
ہیہ این کہ زوقش کم نگردد      نگویم حال دل با رازداران

*The days are ended  
Of winter long,  
The branches quiver  
With living song.  
The breeze in beauty  
Arrays the rose,  
As from the river  
It gently blows.  
Lest my heart's passion  
May softer grow,  
Not to the trusty  
I'll tell my woe.*

When referring to translations of such beauty and charm it seems churlish to refer to certain oversights, but it is necessary to point

<sup>1</sup> Arberry, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, p. 71.

these out with the object of showing how difficult it is to translate Iqbāl. Prof. Arberry has translated

زیاده که بخاک من آتشی آمیخت پیالهٔ بچوانان نو نیاز آور

*Fill me the fiery goblet  
That made my dust to flame.  
Youth thirsts anew, desirous,  
And youth shall quaff the same.*

Here the learned translator has failed to grasp the poet's meaning.

The translation of *Jāvid nāmāh* by Prof. Mahmud Ahmad is in unrhymed verse. The translation represents a fairly faithful rendering of the original and is a correct metrical composition. But, unfortunately, it abounds in quaint and archaic expressions, inversions, and other such features which tend to deprive it of the poetic felicity of the original. Still the translation is, on the whole, beautiful. The translation by Professor Arberry represents several years' hard work and is beautiful on the whole. In order to give an idea of the beauty of Arberry's rendering a translation of some verses is given below:

آں گل و سرو و سمن آں شاخسار	از لطافت مثل تصویر بهار
هر زمان برگ گل و برگ شجر	دارد از ذوق نمو رنگ دگر
این قدر باد صبا آفسون گر است	تا مژهٔ برهم زنی زرد احمر است
هر طرف فولادها گوهر فروش	مرغک فردوس زان اندر خروش

*The roses, the cypresses, the jasmines, the flowering boughs,  
delicate as a picture painted by the hand of spring;  
the petals of the flowers, the leaves of the trees every moment  
put on new colours out of the joy of growth—  
Such a spellbinder the zephyr is  
that as you wink, gold is turned to scarlet;  
on every side pearl-scattering fountains,  
birds born of Paradise in clamant song.<sup>1</sup>*

It will be noticed that the translation preserves the imagery and beauty of the original in a remarkable degree.

In the introduction to his translation Prof. Arberry has referred to the difficulties in translating Iqbāl. Quoting the translation of

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, *Jāvid-Nāma*, p. 125. London, 1966.

## ON TRANSLATING IQBĀL

the following verses by Iqbāl himself Prof. Arberry has some interesting remarks to make:

خواست تا از آب و گل آید برون  
خوشه کز کشت دل آید برون  
آنچه او جوید مقام کبریاست  
این مقام از عقل و حکمت ماوراست

Iqbāl has translated the above lines thus:

*That 'I am' which he seeketh  
Lieth beyond philosophy, beyond knowledge,  
The plant which groweth only from the invisible soil of the  
heart of man,  
Groweth not from a mere heap of clay.*

Prof. Arberry has the following remarks to make about Iqbāl's translation:

The poet thus not only reversed the original order of the two couplets, but also changed the main clause, itself in opposition to the immediately preceding sentence and having the same verbal construction, from the past to the present; nor as will be seen, were these the only liberties he took with himself—liberties which would surely be condemned in any ordinary translation.<sup>1</sup>

It will be interesting to compare Iqbāl's translation with that by Prof. Arberry:

*He yearned for these to come forth from water and clay,  
A cluster sprouting from the seed-bed of the heart.  
What he was seeking was the station of Omnipotence  
Which station transcends reason and philosophy.*

The translation of *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* and *Bandagī nāmāh* by B. A. Dar is so defective that it hardly deserves any mention here. The translator does not seem to understand Iqbāl in many places, and the language used by him in the translation is unidiomatic and crude. The translator has no appreciation of poetic imagery with the result that the beauty and freshness of the original are simply lacking and the translation is not only incorrect but dry as dust. The translation is furnished with exhaustive notes, which a reader will find useful.

*Poems of Iqbāl* containing translations by V. G. Kiernan, published, in the first instance, by Kutb Publishers, Bombay, and then by

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

John Murray of London in 'The Wisdom of the East Series', represents the most satisfying translation of Iqbāl's poems. The translator has attempted successfully to copy not only the rhyme schemes but has succeeded in a remarkable way in imitating the cadence of the quantitative Urdu metres in his accentuated English metres, as in the poems 'The Mosque of Cordova' and 'Time'. At the same time, the rendering of the metaphors and images of the original with judicious modifications, so as to render them understandable to English readers, is also praiseworthy. Working according to such exacting requirements, it is not surprising that some mistakes have crept into the translation or that the language at times acquires a certain stiffness. To give one example of wrong translation. Iqbāl pays the following tribute to Shakespeare:

*Beauty is the mirror of truth, and the human heart of beauty,  
While the mirror of the human heart is the beauty of your  
works.*

Kiernan has translated the above lines as below:

*Beauty truth's mirror, beauty's the heart, the dower  
Of the heart's glass your words' great carnival.<sup>1</sup>*

It is unnecessary to point out that the translator has missed the sense of the original, which is that the best mirror of the human heart is Shakespeare's poetry.

Notwithstanding these minor defects, it must be admitted that on the whole the translations by Kiernan are beautiful and have been obviously accomplished with great labour so that every line reflects a high degree of sensitivity. The translator has said about his task:

*In translating these poems I have tried first of all to give the sense of the originals as exactly as possible without addition or subtraction. As regards form I have kept to regular metres throughout.<sup>2</sup>*

Amongst other translations in English may be mentioned those of *Khidr-i rāh* by A. Q. Niaz and of *Shikwah* and *Jawāb-i shikwah* by Altaf Husain and Prof. Arberry. These are all good translations. The translation of *Shikwah* and *Jawāb-i shikwah* by Arberry represents a fine composition. Translations by Niaz are also beautiful and accurate.

<sup>1</sup> V. G. Kiernan, *Poems from Iqbāl*, p. 42. Bombay, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* London, 1955.

Before we consider translations of Iqbāl in other European languages let us sum up the work of Nicholson, Arberry and Kiernan. These are all great names in the world of scholarship, and at least the former two have wide experience in translating poetry from Persian. Moreover all these had help from Pakistani scholars in reading the original. Dr Nicholson read *Asrār-i khūdī* with Dr Shāfi<sup>c</sup>, who later on became the Principal of the Oriental College, Lahore. Prof. Arberry freely consulted Maulānā ‘Abd al-Majid Sālik. Mr Kiernan consulted Dr Nazir Ahmad of Govt. College, Lahore. In spite of the translators’ scholarship and experience and the help that was available to them we notice with regret that mistakes have crept in the translations. As a matter of fact mistakes in the translation of *Asrār-i khūdī* by Nicholson which were pointed out by Iqbāl form a full-sized pamphlet. Hence it is clear that some more definite action, by way of assistance, is indicated wherever a translation of Iqbāl’s poetry is contemplated. A reference to some of these defects in translation was made by Nicholson himself when he remarked about his translation of *Asrār-i khūdī*:

Often, however, the ideas themselves, being associated with peculiar Oriental ways of thinking, are hard for our minds to follow. I am not sure that I have always grasped the meaning or rendered it correctly.<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Arberry has admitted: “I know of no Oriental poet who confronts the translator with problems so various and so stubborn.”<sup>2</sup> Still, when mentioning these defects we must express our gratitude to these three translators for having undertaken the difficult task of translating Iqbāl and for having spent on it so much labour as well as love. Their work has brought the beauties and glories of Iqbāl’s poetry within the reach of so many people all over the world.

Now we come to other European languages. As is well known, Iqbāl’s fame spread rapidly on the European continent, and he has been translated into several European languages. His poems were translated into German by Dr Otto von Glasenapp, at one time Vice-President of the German State Bank, and Prof. Hell of Erlangen University. This introduced him to the German speaking world. Apart from these translations, his *Jāvid nāmāh* and *Payām-i mashriq* were translated into German by Prof. Annemarie Schimmel of Bonn University. As regards the translation of *Payām-i mashriq*

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *The Secrets of the Self*, p. XII. London, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Arberry, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, p. X. London, 1953.

published under the title of *Botschaft des Ostens*, Dr Riyazul Hasan says: "As regards her translation there is no doubt that she has a remarkable felicity of turning Persian text in appropriate German verse. The rhymes run smoothly and the metres have happy endings. The spirit of Persian expressions and similes is generally maintained. I believe the translator must have had to wrestle with words on many occasions, although the German language lends a special facility for word formations. Yet at places her translation seems to suffer from three defects. Firstly when she does not conform to the original meaning and leaves out important expressions . . . Secondly where she has not correctly understood the delicacy of the Persian idiom or the intricacy of the Persian grammar . . . Thirdly where she has added something of her own either for reasons of rhyme or for other purposes."<sup>1</sup> Dr Riyazul Hasan suggests that the translation must be revised with the help of a Persian scholar. While pointing out the main defects of this translation, we must not fail to record our gratitude to this talented translator for introducing Iqbāl to the German people in a way which previous translations had not done.

The same remarks apply to Prof. Schimmel's translation of *Jāvid nāmāh*, although when translating it, Prof. Schimmel had the help of Prof. Bausani's translation in Italian.

In Italian Prof. Bausani has not only made a complete translation of Iqbāl's *Jāvid nāmāh* and *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, but has also published the translation of a collection of Iqbāl's poems. It is the opinion of critics that although these translations are in prose, on occasions they rise to great poetical heights. The translator has also maintained a scholarly fidelity to the original. By means of illuminating footnotes he has helped the reader to go to the heart of Iqbāl's meaning.

Iqbāl has been translated into French by Madam Meyerovitch. The story of these translations reads like a romance. Madam Meyerovitch came across a copy of Iqbāl's *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. She read it and was so impressed by the profundity of Iqbāl's thought and the depth of his learning that she translated the book into French. This work so charmed her that she wanted to read Iqbāl's poetry, and with this object in view, she studied Persian. After learning Persian she translated *Jāvid nāmāh*, *Zabūr-i ʿajam* and *Payām-i mashriq* into French prose. Critics maintain

<sup>1</sup> *Morning News*, Karachi, dated October 10, 1964.



that these translations are in beautiful language and on the whole correct.

A great scholar of Czechoslovakia, Prof. Jan Marek of Prague University, has translated Iqbāl into Czech. Prof. Marek has lived for a long time in India and Pakistan. He has discussed Iqbāl's poetry with Indian and Pakistani scholars and so he generally succeeds in grasping Iqbāl's meaning. Prof. Marek's translations are said to be correct and in good language. They are very popular in Czechoslovakia.

Lately Iqbāl has become very popular in the U. S. S. R. and a number of translations have appeared, mostly under the direction of Prof. N. P. Anikeyev of the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences, Moscow. As the Institute has many scholars whose mother tongue is Persian it is safe to assume that the translators have not failed to reflect the original.

Coming to the Eastern world, Iqbāl has been translated into Indonesian, Chinese and Bengali languages. It is not possible to express an opinion on the quality of these translations, but it must be stated that the translations into Bengali are by masters of that language. One collection of Iqbāl's Urdu poems, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, has been translated into Persian by a Pakistani scholar, Dr Irfani; otherwise Iranians are quite content with reading Iqbāl's Persian poems only. In Indonesia, Mr Bahram Roughbuti has translated *Asrār-i khūdī* and several other poems. These translations are very popular in Indonesia.

It is actually into Arabic and Turkish that Iqbāl has been translated with great effect and is read widely. In Arabic a Pakistani scholar, Hasan al-Azami, was the first to bring out an anthology of translations. This included Saïdy Aly Shalan's translations of *Shikwah* and *Jawāb-i shikwah*. Amina Nureddin published an anthology in Baghdad. But the great contribution to translations in Arabic has been made by that great scholar, 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām. He has translated *Payām-i mashriq* and *Asrār wa rumūz*. 'Abd-al-Wahhāb 'Azzām was a scholar of Persian and used to write Arabic verse with great ease. Moreover, he had read Iqbāl's poems with some eminent Pakistani scholars; hence his translations, besides being faithful to the original, have the fire and colour of Iqbāl. The Arabic reading public has acclaimed these translations as something new and a

definite enrichment of Arabic literature. Similarly, the translations into Turkish, especially those by Tarlan, are beautiful.

It is unnecessary to deal with the translations of Iqbāl into the regional languages of Pakistan. They have a limited circulation, and only a sentimental value.

Some of Iqbāl's Persian poems have been translated into Urdu verse, for example *Asrār-i khūdī* by Justice S. A. Rahman and Prof. Abdul Rashid, and *Payām-i mashriq* by Abdul Rahman Tariq. These are excellent translations and give a good impression of the original.

So far as English is concerned we are lucky to have for our guidance translations of some of the verses by Iqbāl himself, and these should be very helpful to all future translators. We give below the translation of some lines, from *Jāvid nāmuh*:

از سه شاهد کن شهادت را طلب	زنده یا مرده یا جان بلب
خویش را دیدن بلور خویشتن	شاهد اول شعور خویشتن
خویش را دیدن بلور دیگرے	شاهد ثانی شعور دیگرے
خویش را دیدن بلور ذات حق	شاهد ثالث شعور ذات حق
حی و قائم چوں خدا خود را شمار	پیش این نور اربمانی استوار
ذات را بے پرده دیدن زندگی است	بر مقام خود رسیدن زندگی است
امتحانے دو بروئے شاهدهے	چہست معراج آرزوے شاهدهے
زندگی ما را چوں گل را رنگ و بو	شاهد عادل کہ بے تصدیق او
ور بماند هست او کامل عیار	در حضور کس نماند استوار
پختہ گیر اندر گہ تا بے کہ هست	ذره از کف مدہ تا بے کہ هست
پیش خورشید آرمودن خوشتر است	تاب خود را بر فزودن خوشتر است
امتحان خویش کن 'موجود' باش	پیکر فرسودہ را دیگر تراش
این چلیں 'موجود' است و بس	این چلیں 'موجود' است و بس
ورنہ نار زندگی دود است و بس	ورنہ نار زندگی دود است و بس

*Art thou in the stage of 'life', 'death', or 'death-in-life'?*  
*Invoke the aid of three witnesses to verify thy 'Station'.*  
*The first witness is thine own consciousness—*  
*See thyself, then, with thine own light.*  
*The second witness is the consciousness of another ego—*  
*See thyself, then, with the light of an ego other than thee.*  
*The third witness is God's consciousness—*  
*See thyself, then, with God's light.*  
*If thou standest unshaken in front of this light,*  
*Consider thyself as living and eternal as He!*

*That man alone is real who dares—  
Dares to see God face to face!  
What is 'Ascension'? Only a search for a witness  
Who may finally confirm thy reality—  
A witness whose confirmation alone makes thee eternal.  
No one can stand unshaken in His Presence;  
And he who can, verily, he is pure gold.  
Art thou a mere particle of dust?  
Tighten the knot of thy ego;  
And hold fast to thy tiny being!  
How glorious to burnish one's ego  
And to test its lustre in the presence of the Sun!  
Re-chisel, then, thine ancient frame;  
And build up a new being.  
Such being is real being;  
Or else thy ego is a mere ring of smoke!*

The above lines have been translated by Prof. Arberry as follows:

*Whether you be alive, or dead, or dying—  
for this seek witness from three witnesses.  
The first witness is self-consciousness,  
to behold oneself in one one's own light;  
the second witness is the consciousness of another,  
to behold oneself in another's light;  
the third witness is the consciousness of God's essence.  
to behold oneself is the light of God's essences.  
If you remain fast before this light,  
Count yourself living and abiding as God!  
Life is to attain one's own station,  
life is to see the Essence without a veil;  
the true believer will not make do with Attributes—  
the Prophet was not content save with the Essence.  
What is Ascension? The desire for a witness,  
an examination face-to-face of a witness—  
a competent witness without whose confirmation  
life to us is like colour and scent to a rose.  
In that presence no man remains firm,  
or if he remains, he is of perfect assay.  
Give not away one particle of the glow you have,  
Knot tightly together the glow within you;*

*airer it is to increase one's glow,  
fairer it is to test oneself before the sun;  
then chisel anew the crumbled form;  
make proof of yourself; be a true being!  
Only such an existent is praiseworthy,  
otherwise the fire of life is mere smoke.*<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Arberry has, through a combination of poetry and scholarship, achieved an English translation not unworthy of Iqbal's genius and true to the reader's demand for living diction, clarity, and swift-ness. While retaining the lyric and mystic spirit of the original he has succeeded to a large extent in finding modern English equivalent of Iqbal's style. Both translations are so perfect that it will be impertinence to make any remarks comparing them. But reading them one realizes the desirability of encouraging more than one translation of Iqbal's poems.

There are critics who object to translation of poetry into verse. We have already dealt with this question above but we would like to quote the translator of Homer's *Odyssey*:

This translation of the *Odyssey* in verse is the first to be published for many years. The prose renderings available, though good in their kind, give an inadequate impression of Homer's epic poem: they can neither imitate the rhythms nor achieve the dramatic tension of the original.<sup>2</sup>

It is certainly difficult at times to find suitable expressions for typically oriental ideas in a European language, especially with the limitations that the requirements of metre and rhyme impose, but those who maintain that these difficulties are insurmountable should read Gertrude Bell's translations of Hafiz or Nicholson's translation of *al-Ma'arri*.

It will be seen that we have briefly surveyed the translations of Iqbal in various languages and as a result of this survey we can draw some useful conclusions for the guidance of future translators:

- i. Translations of Iqbal can be in prose or in verse.
- ii. So far as European languages are concerned, we find that even eminent scholars, like Nicholson, have very often failed to interpret Iqbal correctly. Hence every possible help must be

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, of *Javid-Nama*, p. 29, lines 233—266. London, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Robert Frytzt. London, 1962.

extended to translators by the various bodies which exist for encouraging the study of Iqbāl.

- iii. Where this is not possible, translations, as soon as published, must be scrutinized under the supervision of such bodies, and if any gross errors are detected in the translations they should be pointed out to the translators. In most cases translators will be only too glad to know cases of wrong interpretation.
- iv. There is no doubt that Iqbāl's poetry is at times capable of more than one interpretation; hence even in one language we can have more than one translation. We must remember that so many translations of European classics like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Divine Comedy* and *Faust* have been published and that every one of these translations is appreciated by the public. It is a common experience to find several translations, say *Faust*, of on the shelf of a European scholar.

To sum up, we should be glad to welcome translations of Iqbāl in prose as well as verse, and more than one translations of a poem should be encouraged. But the publishers must see to it that the translators are given every possible help in their difficult task and the translations are subjected to proper scrutiny before publication.

## AN APPRECIATION OF GURU NANAK IN IQBĀL'S POETRY

HAFEEZ MALIK

In discussing the development of the Hindu religion and culture historians appropriately highlight and compliment the assimilative and synthetic character of both. Throughout Indian history a four-stage process is generally evident: foreign races invaded India; they became amalgamated with the native Indian population; the foreign and indigenous cultures were synthesized, and the invaders eventually disappeared as a separate entity. However, dispassionate and objective Indian and foreign historians, including H. G. Rawlinson,<sup>1</sup> and R. C. Majumdar, have maintained that "unlike the previous invaders, the Muslims did not merge themselves with the Hindus, and thus for the first time the population of India was divided into two separate units with marked distinctions. This was the historic beginning of the Hindu-Muslim problem that led after more than six hundred years to the creation of Pakistan."<sup>2</sup>

Although this assessment is gaining wide acceptance, it nevertheless only partially corresponds to reality since it makes no allowance for the emergence of Sikhism, and the Sikh nationality in India. Most Western scholars have dealt with the Sikhs as if they represent a religious denomination within Hinduism. A serious study of history would indicate that Sikhism is a distinct religion unto itself, and that in the course of history Sikhs developed their own cultural identity and national consciousness.

### *The Emergence of Sikhism*

In medieval India three aspects of Hinduism—"caste, idolatry and esoteric obscurantism"<sup>3</sup>—were attacked by the protagonists of Islam. The Hindu religious reformation was therefore marked by attempts in these directions. First, Ramanuja in the South (1016-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. G. Rawlinson, *India: A Short Cultural History*, p. 234. London, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *et. al.*, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp XXIX, 616-7. Bombay, 1960.

<sup>3</sup> S. R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India*, p. 207. Bombay, 1937.

1137), Namadev in the Deccan, Mira Bai in Rajputana, Ramananda (b. 1300 A. D.), Kabīr (1440-1518) and Rai Das (15th century) by preaching and practice, denounced the Brahmanical caste exclusiveness. Secondly, though they preached *Bhakti* (loving devotion) emphasizing the unity of God and absolute submission to His will, image-worship retained a place in the *Bhakti* movement.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, they appealed to the hearts of the people, singing to them in the regional languages as against the Sanskrit. It was, however, Ramananda's Muslim disciple, Kabīr,<sup>2</sup> who carried the message of *Bhakti* across the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Many of these savants had taken measured steps to develop a religious *modus vivendi* with Islam. Consequently, towards the end of the 15th century the impact of the *Bhakti* movement had overshadowed Orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism.

Against this background the emergence of Sikhism in the Punjab was an understandable overture of Hinduism to establish a rapprochement with Islam. Discussing the genesis of Sikhism during the fifteenth century Khushwant Singh has stated:

Sikhism was born of a wedlock between Hinduism and Islam after they had known each other for a period of nearly nine hundred years. But once it had taken birth, it began to develop a personality of its own and in due course it grew into a faith which had some semblance to Hinduism, some Islam, and yet had features which bore no resemblance to either.<sup>3</sup>

This description cannot be disputed. However, a comparative study of Sikhism and Islam would reveal that in its fundamental beliefs the former is closer to Islam than to Hinduism. A review of Sikhism's salient features would demonstrate this:

#### *i. Monotheism*

Prophet Muḥammad preached strict monotheism, so did Guru

<sup>1</sup> For the *Bhakti* movement see M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* p. 111 ff. London, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> For the biography and religious beliefs of Kabīr (who was deeply influenced by the Hindu reformative Vaishnav movement) see an excellent article by Rai Bahadur Lala Sitaram, 'Kabir' *Journal of the Department of Letters*, vol. XVII, pp 1-36, Calcutta University Press, 1928. A complete list of a voluminous mass of writings attributed to Kabir as preserved in *Khas Granth* will be found in George Abraham Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan*, pp 7-8. Calcutta, 1889.

<sup>3</sup> Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, vol. I, p. 17. Princeton, 1963.

Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. Both had refused to yield on the concept of *tauḥīd* (the unity of God). As a monotheist, Guru Nanak parted company with the *Bhaktas*, who, while professing monotheism, believed in the reincarnation of God, and His *avatars*. Guru Nanak condemned idol-worship, because the people looked upon the idols as God instead of symbolic representations. He likened God to Truth, which was before the world began, which is, and which will endure for ever, as the ultimate idea or cause of all we know. The concept of the unity of God is beautifully described in the opening lines of Guru Nanak's celebrated prayer—the *Japji*. Also, it is the basic belief of Sikhism:

*There is no but one God whose name is true—the Creator,  
devoid of fear and enmity, immortal Unborn, self-  
existent; by the favour of the Guru.*<sup>1</sup>

*Repeat His Name.*

*The True One was in the beginning; the True One was in  
the primal age.*

*The True One is now also, O Nanak; the True One also  
shall be.*<sup>2</sup>

Nanak was born to Mehta Kalian Das Bedi and his wife in the village of Talwandi (subsequently named after the Guru—Nankana Sahib; now located in West Pakistan). In this village Nanak's father was probably a *patwari* (village accountant). About forty miles from Lahore, Talwandi was, as it is now, numerically dominated by the Muslims. Consequently, Nanak grew up in the Muslim cultural milieu. Some Muslim sources even believe that Nanak in his early years was educated by a Muslim, one Sayyid Ḥasan, a neighbour of Nanak's who developed "an affection for young Nanak," because he did not have a child of his own.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, that Nanak had

<sup>1</sup> Here Guru means the Great Teacher, i.e., God.

<sup>2</sup> *Adi-Granth*, trans. Ernest Trumpp, pp 1-13. London, 1877. The *Japji* was written by Guru Nanak when he was at an advanced age. Cf. Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, vol. I, p. 195. Oxford, 1909; see also, Charles Wilkins, 'Seeks and Their College', *Asiatic Researches*, No. I, pp 288-292. Calcutta, 1788.

<sup>3</sup> Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain Ṭabāṭba'ī, *Siyar al-Muta'akkhkhārīn*, vol. I, p. 82. Calcutta, 1902; Cf. also, Muḥsin Fānī, *Dabistān al-Madhāhib*, trans. David Shea, p. 284. New York, 1937. Sikh sources, however, do not accept this.



internalized the concept of *tauḥīd* cannot be denied.<sup>1</sup> A few citations from the *Qur'ān* would establish the intellectual source of the *Japji*. In *sūra al-Ḥadīd* (57: 1-3) the *Qur'ān* says:

Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the glory of God, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death; and He is possessor of power over all things. He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is knower of all things.

Regarding the divine Unity *sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* (112: 1-4) is definitive:

Say: He Allah, is One. Allah is He on whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like Him.<sup>2</sup>

Elucidating the concept of *tauḥīd* Guru Nanak uses substantially the same language:

*The Lord of Lords is the One God; the Almighty Himself;  
Oh Nanak! His qualities are beyond comprehension.*<sup>3</sup>

## ii. Equality of Man

In upholding the dignity and equality of man. Islam and Sikhism speak with one voice. Several verses of the *Qur'ān* affirm the unity of creation proceeding directly from the unity of the Creator. Here, only one text need be cited:

Blessed is He in Whose hand is kingdom and He has power over all things; Who has created death and life that He may try you—which of you is best in deeds, and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving.<sup>4</sup>

Nanak's movement aimed at the creation of a casteless society in India. The caste system in India was the result of the Aryan conquest (2000-1000 B.C.) of Northern India. "The tall, blond, and blue-eyed invaders devised this system to maintain the purity of

<sup>1</sup> The *Guru Granth* compiled by Guru Arjun (1563-1606) includes a chapter—*Shalok Shaikh Farīd Ke*—containing 112 *Shlokas* of *Shaikh Farīd al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj-i Shakar* (1175-1265), a *Chishtī ṣūfī* of the Punjab. These *Shlokas*, written in the Multani Punjabi, sing of Divine Love, highlighting the need for the purification of inner self and the transient character of human existence. Nizami considers *Shaikh Ibrāhīm*, a contemporary of Guru Nanak and the disciple of *Ganj-i Shakar*, to be the real author. Cf. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *The Life And Times Of Shaikh Farīd-u'd-Dīn Ganj-i Shakar*, pp 121-2, Aligarh, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Qur'ān*, trans. Maulānā Mauḥammad 'Alī, pp 1028, 1219. Lahore, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> *Adi-Granth*, p. 651.

<sup>4</sup> *Qur'ān* 67 : 2-3.

their race and reduce to servitude the dark-skinned inhabitants among whom they had come to live."<sup>1</sup> They divided the society into four *varnas*, (colours, i.e., castes) namely, Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (soldiers), Vaishyas (tradesmen or agriculturalists) and Shudras (menial workers). At the bottom of the social pyramid were placed the pure aboriginal inhabitants, who in more recent times have been called 'untouchables' and 'scheduled castes'. Irawati Karve, a noted Indian anthropologist, points out that "endogamy, distribution over a definite region and a hereditary occupation" are the characteristics of a caste. Also, she maintains that "untouchability is a characteristic of the caste structure from top to bottom."<sup>2</sup> More important, caste is the essential machinery for the attainment of *moksha*, deliverance of soul from the process of earthly reincarnations.<sup>3</sup>

Nanak is unequivocal in deploring the caste system, and untouchability. *Guru ka Langar* (the community kitchen) was started by Nanak to eliminate untouchability and to emphasize democratic equality of his followers. A few lines from *Asā di Wār* would demonstrate this:

*Once we say: This is pure, this unclean,  
See that in all things there is life unseen.  
There are worms in wood and cowdung cakes,  
There is life in the corn ground into bread.  
There is life in the water which makes it green.  
How then be clean when impurity is over the Kitchen spread?*

Similarly, the *Qur'ān* has emphasized the equality of all believers in unmistakable terms:

The believers are naught else than brothers.<sup>4</sup>

### iii. The Philosophy of Life

Islam is not merely a 'religion' as the term is understood in the West. Islam is an ethical, social and political system, and deals simultaneously with this world and life hereafter. Laws of war and peace and the rules of salvation are equally important in the system

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, pp 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Irawati Karve, *Kinship Organization in India*, pp 6-7. Bombay, 1965.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Moreland & Atul C. Chatterjee, pp 20-21. *A Short History of India*. New York, 1945.

<sup>4</sup> 49 : 10.

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<sup>4</sup> 49 : 10.

of Islam. Sikhism is not a comprehensive religion in the Islamic sense. This is not to suggest that Sikhism did not evolve a religious code or secular orientation. It most certainly developed both, but in their development they did not acquire systematization, and their integration in the total structure of Sikhism. Yet in its pragmatic approach to life Sikhism is not too far from Islam.

Prophet Muḥammad was a statesman, a minister and a householder; Nanak, however, never aspired to be a statesman. His life was that of a preacher and a householder, and his religion was for the householder (*grihastha dharma*). Consequently, he strongly disapproved of monastic other-worldliness sustained by charity. Nanak himself was married, and according to Muslim sources, engaged in trade.<sup>1</sup> Despite his prolonged absences from home, he would invariably return to his family. His ideal of life is exquisitely stated in a verse from *Suhi*:

*If thou must the patch of true religion see,  
Among the world's impurities, be of impurities free.*<sup>2</sup>

#### iv. *The Central Role of the Teacher*

Muḥammad was a Prophet, the recipient of divine revelation. Belief in the prophecy of Muḥammad is a *sine qua non* of Islamic faith. The *shahada* eminently confirms this: *lā ilāha illa'llāh Muḥammadun rasūlu'llāh* (no God whatsoever but Allāh, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh). Nanak, on the other hand, claimed for himself the status of a teacher (*guru*); he was a guide and not a god. Yet the institution of Guru is central to Sikhism; without the Guru salvation could not be achieved. Consequently, nine generally accepted *gurus* followed Guru Nanak: Angad (1504-1552), Amar Das (1479-1574), Ram Das (1534-1581), Arjun (1563-1606), Hargobind (1595-1644), Har Rai (1630-1661), Hari Krishen (1656-1664), Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) and Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Highlighting the significance of the institution of Guru, Sher Singh, an authority on Sikhism, has appropriately stated:

The belief of unity in the plurality of the *gurus* served as a useful purpose in the development of Sikhism. But for this belief there would have been no Sikh nation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fānī described Nanak as a "grain-factor of Daulat Khān Lodi," who was one of the distinguished *umara* (lords) of Ibrāhīm Khān Lodi, the Sovereign of India (1517-1526). Muḥsin Fānī, *Dabistān al-Maḥāhib*, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, p. 46. Lahore, 1944.

Like the Caliphs in the world of Islam, the Sikh gurus not only streamlined religious content of Sikhism, but also gave a feeling of national consciousness to the followers of Nanak.

### *Sikh National Consciousness*

The embryo of Sikh national consciousness was nourished by religious and secular symbols. Religious symbols integrated the Sikhs by setting them apart from Islam and Hinduism. Guru Angad developed the linguistic symbols, facilitating communication in the Sikh society. This was achieved through the invention of *gurmukhi* (from the mouth of the Guru), the script of the Punjabi language;<sup>1</sup> thus Punjabi became the Sikh national language. Guru Amar Das introduced new ceremonials for births and deaths, in which the recitations of the gurus' hymns replaced the chanting of Sanskrit *shlokas*. Also, he strictly forbade *sati*, the Hindu practice of burning the widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands.<sup>2</sup> This became imperative because the Sikh faith had drawn its overwhelming number of devotees from the Hindu peasantry. The open challenge to established Hindu modes resulted in the persecution of the Sikhs by the Hindus.

Guru Arjun constructed the Sikh national shrine at Amritsar (literally the pool of nectar). Challenged by his brother's pretensions to spiritual leadership of the Sikhs, Arjun compiled the authoritative text of the *Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture, and formally installed it in the temple at Amritsar. The rising spiritual influence of Arjun was complemented by his political aspirations. The devotees called him the *Sacha Padshah* (the true Emperor). The Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr's (1605-1628) rebellious son *Khusraw* was comforted by Arjun, which resulted in his execution by the Emperor's order. The Sikh national consciousness, spurred by the Hindus' and the Muslims' persecution, was vividly expressed by Arjun before his execution:

*I do not keep the Hindu fast, nor the Muslim Ramaḍān,*

*I serve Him alone who is my refuge.*

*I serve the One Master, who is also Allāh.*

*I have broken with the Hindu and the Muslim,*

<sup>1</sup> "Angad took the thirty-five letters of the acrostic composed by Nanak, selected the appropriate letters from other scripts in Northern India, and called the new script *gurmukhi*." Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, pp 51-2.

<sup>2</sup> Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp 61-62.

*I will not worship with the Hindu, nor like the Muslim go to  
Mecca,*

*I shall serve Him and no other.*

*I will not pray to idols nor say the Muslim prayer.*

*I shall put my heart at the feet of the One Supreme Being,  
For we are neither Hindus nor Mussalmans.<sup>1</sup>*

Succeeding his father to guruship, Guru Hargobind announced his political ambitions openly: "My rosary shall be the swordbelt and on my turban I shall wear the emblem of royalty."<sup>2</sup> He would sit on a throne and hold a court. The Sikhs chanted hymns of peace no more and instead discussed strategies of military conquest. Finally, their national consciousness was matured by the leadership of Guru Gobind, the tenth Guru. Gobind defied Emperor Aurangzeb 'Ālamgīr's (1658-1707) illiberal policies, and thus involved the Sikhs into a protracted conflict with the Muslim power in India. With "the baptism of the sword,"<sup>3</sup> Gobind prescribed five symbols for the Sikhs: they must keep their *kays* (wear hair and beard unshaven), carry a *kangha* (comb) in their hair, always wear a *kacha* (knee-length pair of breeches), wear a *kara* (steel bracelet), and must remain always armed with a *kirpan* (sabre). Also, the Hindu names were abolished and one family name Singh was substituted for the Sikh nationality. Commenting on the leadership of Guru Gobind Khushwant Singh says: "... a new people were born—bearded, beturbaned, fully armed, and with a crusader's zeal to build a new commonwealth."<sup>4</sup> The battle-cry of *Raj kare ga Khalsa* (The Sikhs shall rule) was to echo for ever in the annals of Punjab's history.

### *Iqbāl's View of Sikhism*

Iqbāl's attitude towards Guru Nanak, in a way, is typical of the Muslims' reaction to Sikhism. Sikhism, as the ethical system, expounded by Guru Nanak, bearing fundamental similarities to Islam, is admired. At the ideological level most Indian and Pakistani Muslims feel a spiritual bond of *tauhid* with the Sikhs. Yet politically both have been at loggerheads with each other, often

1 Cited from *Bhairav* by Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

2 Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 2.

3 Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, *Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 69, Bombay 1950.

4 Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

expressing political aspirations and ambitions at the expense of one another. Since the Sikhs' religious and secular development took place during the period of the Muslim rule in India this ambivalence has been unavoidable. Iqbāl's admiration of Guru Nanak, however, was unqualified.

Muḥammad Iqbāl dedicated an exquisite poem—*Nanak*—to the ideas of Guru Nanak. The poem is included in the third section of *Bāng-i durā* (1924), and was composed some time after his return (1908) from Europe. Before 1908 most of Iqbāl's poems reflected the poet's attachment to romanticism; in fact some of the poems are elegant adaptations from William Cooper, Emerson, Longfellow, Tennyson and other English poets. Political and religious themes are only faintly reflected in some poems of the pre-1908 period. A notable exception, however, was *Tarāna-i Hindi* (the Indian National Anthem), which India failed to adopt in the heat of political passions. After 1908 Iqbāl's political thinking matured; religious, historical and social themes increasingly captured his poetic imagination to the exclusion of romanticism. He expounded not only the theory of purposive art, but successfully applied his poetic genius to nourish Muslim nationalism in India. Finally in 1930 he articulated the two-nation theory which the All-India Muslim League officially adopted in 1940 to demand Pakistan.

*Nanak* was the creation of Iqbāl's mature years and highly sophisticated poetic art. The poem is sensitive in the selection of idiom and historical imagery. With a transparent sincerity, Iqbāl analysed the cultural development of India. While he appreciated the philosophic accomplishments of the ancient Hindu sages, he subjected the Hindu caste order to vigorous denunciation. Consequently, Buddha shines in *Nanak* as a champion of human equality and Guru Nanak stands as a guardian of the integrity of God's Unity.

*The [Hindu] nation paid no heed to the message of Gotama  
Buddha,*

*And she failed to recognize the shining pearl.*

*How sad the unheeding ones remained deaf to the message  
of truth!*

*Indeed the tree is unaware of the sweetness of its fruit.*

*The secret of life indeed was disclosed by the Buddha,*

*But India remained engaged in the pride of its contemplative  
thought.*

## AN APPRECIATION OF GURU NANAK IN IQBĀL'S POETRY

*India's assembly was not illumined by the light of divine  
radiance,  
Divine grace descended like rain but the arid soil was not  
receptive.*

*Alas! India remains a house of bondage for the low-caste man,  
Her heart dead to the sufferings of fellow man,  
The Brahmin is still proud of his vain philosophy,  
While the light of Buddha shines in the stranger's home.  
The idol-house of India radiated with light once again,  
The torch of Abraham blazed Āzar's abode once again.  
Again the voice of tauhīd was raised in the Punjab  
And a perfect man awoke India from her muse.<sup>1</sup>*

To Guru Nanak and Iqbāl *tauḥīd* for monotheism is the essence of religious faith. Prof. Annemarie Schimmel quite appropriately remarked "...Iqbāl has built his [philosophic] system upon the principle of *tauḥīd*, the acknowledgement of the absolute uniqueness of God which is reflected in the unity of individual life, and the unity of religio-political groups."<sup>2</sup> Also, for Iqbāl the social order of

<sup>1</sup> *Bāng-i darā:*

قوم نے پیغام گوتم کی ذرا پروا نہ کی  
قدر پہچانی نہ اپنے گوہر یک دانہ کی  
آہ بد قسمت دے آواز حق سے بیخبر  
غافل اپنے پھل کی شیرینی سے ہوتا ہے شجر  
آشکار اس نے کیا جو زندگی کا راز تھا  
ہند کو لیکن خیالی فلسفہ پر ناز تھا  
شمع حق سے جو منور ہو یہ وہ محفل نہ تھی  
بارش رحمت ہوئی لیکن زمیں قابل نہ تھی  
آہ شوق کے لئے ہندوستان شمع خانہ ہے  
درد انسانی سے اس بستی کا دل بیگانہ ہے  
برہمن سرشار ہے اب تک مئے پلدار میں  
شمع گوتم جل رہی ہے محفل اغیار میں  
بتکدہ پھر بعد مدت کے مگر روشن ہوا  
نور ابراہیم سے آزد کا گھر روشن ہوا  
پھر اٹھی آخر صدا توحید کی پنجاب سے  
ہند کو اک مرد کامل نے جکایا خواب سے

<sup>2</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 86. Leiden, 1963.



Islam (in contrast to Hinduism) is based upon the principle of *tauḥīd*. And "the essence of *tauḥīd*, as a working idea, is equality, solidarity and freedom."

It might be well to point out that Iqbāl's support for the creation of a separate Muslim State in India was very largely motivated by his passionate dedication to implementing the concept of *tauḥīd*, in a concrete political situation. "Submission to the will and unity of God frees the individual from the man-made obligation of rendering homage to all social, religious and political Gods." This concept permeates through the volumes of *Asrār-i khūdī*, *Ḍarb-i Kalīm* and *Payām-i mashariq*, and is succinctly stated in his lectures:

Islam, as a polity, is only a practical means of making this principle [of *tauḥīd*] a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.<sup>1</sup>

From among the western scholars, Sikhism found a good translator of *Adi-Granth* in Ernest Trumpp, but most certainly an inaccurate and misleading interpreter of Guru Nanak's religious convictions. In his introduction to the *Adi-Granth*, Trumpp says:

We should be wrong in assuming that Nanak forbade the worship of other gods, on the ground of the Unity of Supreme. Far from doing so, he took over the whole Hindu pantheon with all its mythological background with the only difference that the whole was subordinated to the supreme Brahman...Nanak remained a thorough Hindu, according to all his views....<sup>2</sup>

That the Sikh authorities rightly reject this view cannot be overemphasized. Iqbāl extolled Guru Nanak's *tauḥīd* not only in his poem—*Nanak*—but upheld the Guru's monotheism in yet another poem—*Hindūstānī bachchuṁ kā qaumī gīt* (Indian Children's Patriotic Song). The opening verse reflects Iqbāl's passionate bond of *tauḥīd* with Guru Nanak.

*The land where Chishū sang his truthful message,  
The land where Nanak sung the lyric of tauḥīd,  
The land where alien Tartars settled,*

1 Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 147. Lahore, 1958.

2 Ernest Trumpp, *Adi-Granth*, op. cit., pp C 1-C 11.

*The land which lured the Arabs from Arabia,  
Is surely my land; is surely my land.<sup>1</sup>*

In addition to *tauḥīd* Guru Nanak and Iqbāl have idealized 'love' and 'the brotherhood of man'. Despite this convergence of views, their interpretations differ. To Iqbāl, love is the creative impulse of ego (*khūdī*), when it has assimilated unto itself the dynamic qualities of God. "Love means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and the endeavour to realize them." The opposite of love, to Iqbāl, is *suwāl* (asking), and "all that is achieved without personal effort comes under *suwāl*." In reality, Iqbāl's conception of love is derived from the *Qur'ān*. Following the *Qur'ānic* dictum

Blessed is God, the best of those who create.<sup>2</sup>

Iqbāl believed that by partaking in the creative functions of God the individual ego demonstrates the power of assimilative action. In *Maṣjīd-i Qurṭuba* (The Mosque of Cordova) Iqbāl has beautifully highlighted the creative quality of love:

*Love is Gabriel's breath, Love is Muḥammad's strong heart,  
Love is the envoy of God, Love the utterance of God.  
Even our mortal clay, touched by Love's ecstasy, glows;  
Love is a new-pressed wine, Love is the goblet of kings,  
Love the priest of the shrine, Love the commander of hosts,  
Love the son of the road, counting a thousand homes.*

<sup>1</sup> *Bāng-i darā:*

چشتی نے جس زمیں میں پیغام حق سنایا  
نانک نے جس چمن میں وحدت کا گہت گایا  
تاتاریوں نے جس کو اپنا وطن بنایا  
جس نے حجازیوں سے دشت عرب چھڑایا  
مہرا وطن وہی ہے مہرا وطن وہی ہے

<sup>2</sup> 23:14.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the founder of the *Chishtiyah ṣūfī* order, Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī. He settled at Ajmer before the conquest of Delhi by the Muslims (12th century). In view of his missionary activities in India, Amīr Khurd has described him as *Nā'ib-i rasūl Allāh fī'l-Hind* (The Prophet's Deputy in India)—Amīr Khurd (Sayyid Muḥammad bin Mubārak Kirmānī), *Siyar al-auliya*, p. 45, Delhi, 1302/1884; Cf. also, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Tārīkh-i mashā'ikh-i Chishtī*, p. 142, Delhi, 1953.

*Love is the plectrum that draws music from life's taut strings,  
Love is the warmth of life, Love is the radiance of life.<sup>1</sup>*

Guru Nanak, in his conception of love, reflects the profound impact of the *Bhakti* movement. Loving devotion to a personal God ultimately leads to self-annihilation; but love cannot be instilled without the Guru. Only Guru's therapeutic hands eliminate egoism from the devotee's heart, enabling him to acquire spiritual bliss:

*O man! How wilt thou be released without Love?  
Through the Guru's Word. He becometh manifest as per-  
vading all and exciteth Devotion in them!  
O man, love God as the lotus loves the water!  
The more it is beaten by the waves, the more its love is  
excited.  
Having received its life in the water, it dies without water.<sup>2</sup>*

Like the *Bhaktas* Guru Nanak also likens God to the husband, and the devotee to the wife:

*All are the female friends of the Husband, all adorn  
themselves;  
They make their own estimates; but mind, fancy dress is not  
the proper ode.  
By hypocrisy the affection of the Husband is not obtained;  
Counterfeit, overgliding is miserable.  
O God, thus the women enjoys her husband!  
The favoured women, who please Thee, Thou mercifully  
adornest  
The body and heart of her, who is adored with the Guru's  
Word,  
Are with the Beloved [Husband],  
Both hands joined she attends and looks out and utters an  
earnest prayer.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, pp 128-129, Lahore, 1964; V. G. Kiernan, *Poems From Iqbāl*, p. 38, London, 1955. In his Foreword to 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chughtā'i's *Diwān-i Ghālib: Muraqqa'-i Chughtā'i* (Lahore, 1928), p. II, Iqbāl has said: "Both God and man live by perpetual creation."

<sup>2</sup> Sri Rag. M. I, Asht. Sh. II.

<sup>3</sup> Sri Rag. M. I. Asht. Sh. II.

## AN APPRECIATION OF GURU NANAK IN IQBĀL'S POETRY

Guru Nanak firmly believed in the innate goodness and brotherhood of man:

He believed that all human beings have a basic fund of goodness which, like the pearl in the oyster, only awaits the opening of the shell to emerge and enrich him. But most human beings are as ignorant of the goodness in them as the deer is of the aromatic *kasturi* in its naiv...<sup>1</sup>

Man freed of his impurities by the Guru entered the brotherhood of man. In a nutshell Sikhism as an eclectic creed was designed by Nanak to make man love his fellow man.

Iqbāl, on the other hand, a product of the East and the West, speaks both in verse and prose employing modern terminology. He opposed nationalism in Europe and India, because its racial overtones pitted man against man and nation against nation:

*Rapacity has split up humanity into warring camps,  
Speak therefore the language of love and teach the lesson of  
brotherhood!  
What are all these distinctions of Indians, Afghans, Tartars  
and Khorasanis?  
Thou art tied to the seashore; leap forward into limitless  
freedom!  
Thy wings are covered with the dust of creed and colour,  
O bird of the Haram, shake thy wings before taking to flight.*

Despite his opposition to nationalism, Iqbāl supported the movement for the creation of a separate sovereign Muslim State in India.<sup>2</sup> He believed that the Muslim State of his vision would be only a first step in the creation of a brotherhood of man. This apparent contradiction was resolved in his mind by the nature of Islamic ideology, committed to upholding the fraternity of man:

*What is the final goal of Nature and the inner purpose of  
Islam?  
The Universal brotherhood of man and plentitude of love.  
Smash the idols of blood, colour and race and lose thyself in  
the community [the Islamic Society].*

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<sup>1</sup> Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> For Iqbāl's role as a political thinker and politician see also, Hafeez Malik, (ed.) *Iqbāl: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, an international symposium, to be published by Columbia University Press in 1968.

*Abolish all distinctions between the Tartars, the Persians  
and the Afgahns.<sup>1</sup>*

How successful have Sikhism and Islam been in the creation of a brotherhood of man? Their accomplishment is not very encouraging; nor have for that matter Christianity and Socialism been more successful. Perhaps mankind is destined to live fragmented. It is comforting, however, to know that the great intellectual and spiritual movements in the annals of man have recognized the kinship of the human race. In the Indian sub-continent, it would be futile to pretend that love binds the Sikhs and the Muslims. The imperatives of history have left a bitter legacy for both; yet even today in the Punjab, many Muslims would affectionately say:

*Babā Nanak Shāh Faqīr  
Sikhañ da guru, Musalmañ da pīr.*

(Babā Nanak is the King of mystics. He is the guru of Sikhs, and a Pīr [guide] of the Muslims.)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luce-Claude Maitre, *Introduction a la Pensée d'Iqbal*, trans. M. A. Majeed Dar, p. 18, Karachi, n. d.

## SOME ASPECTS OF IQBĀL'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

FAZLUR RAHMAN

The primary task of research on Iqbāl should be to search for and find the basic unity of his thought to which all its different aspects can be referred and synthesized and from which they derive their meaning. We say this should be the primary task of research on Iqbāl now because not only have different schools of thought—from the Communists to the rabid Muslim Traditionalist—tried to seek support from his utterances but also modern critics and scholars, notably Sir Hamilton R. Gibb, have characterized him as a bundle of contradictions. It is, of course, possible and it is also a matter of common experience that men are guilty of self-contradictions, sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle and semi-conscious or unconscious, as it were. Poets are particularly susceptible to contradictoriness because their reactions, due to their sensitivity, tend to be sharp and also partial.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to swallow the assertion that a man like Iqbāl who is not just a poet but who has displayed intellectual qualities of a high order—qualities both of assimilation and creativeness—should so blatantly contradict himself on extremely fundamental issues. To praise the West and to condemn it; set the highest value on democracy and yet seemingly to ridicule it; to advocate pure and ceaseless onward move and progress and at the same time to exhibit an attitude of almost immobile conservatism, etc. Are these simple juxtapositions of contradictions or can they be put in a more fundamental and ultimate perspective where they become intelligible and meaningful? We are tempted to think that the latter of the two courses is possible and should, therefore, be adopted. If this is not done, the most fundamental principles of Iqbāl's philosophy shall mock us. For, according to Iqbāl, the ultimate reality itself is a unity which creates multiplicity—whatever name we may give to that unity. This belief is so strong in Iqbāl that everything else seems to assume a secondary position. But if that be so, it would look extremely odd if Iqbāl himself possesses no fundamental and organic unity in his thinking and should be simply content with issuing contradictory statements from time to time.

In this brief paper we cannot enumerate all the apparent contradictions of Iqbāl, let alone attempt to solve them; but we shall attempt to describe certain basic and broad features of the political order he had in mind and shall try to draw a synthetic picture of the various positions he took on such questions as democracy, religious State versus the secular one etc.

The first question to be discussed in this connexion is Iqbāl's views on the nature of secularism and the secular and the profane and on what constitutes true religion and spirituality. It is important to raise this question because even some well-meaning people think it very strange that the same Iqbāl whose catholic mind saw divinity everywhere, who saw something essentially good even in the role played by the Devil, who gave credit to Communism for what it was worth, should have supported the idea of an Islamic solidarity and spoken in exclusivist terms. For these people, the only tenable conclusion to be drawn from this is that Iqbāl who philosophically saw spirituality everywhere and was a universalist in intellectual intent, nevertheless succumbed to the dogmatism of his fellow-religionists and became the advocate of an Islamic solidarity. For us, to dismiss the question in such simple terms as these exhibits the naiveté of the critics. The first question is: What constitutes secularism according to Iqbāl?

Iqbāl himself tells us insistently that there is a basic principle involved in the unfoldment of the process of reality. This principle, which is both synthetic and creative and is most like an organic unity, is what he terms *‘ishq* (Love). One consequence of this belief, which Iqbāl also claims is based on experience is that all development, creativity and multiplicity must take place with reference to this unitive principle and, secondly, that take place it must. Thus, if there is no creativity and no multiplicity taking place, this would be a complete denial of the first principle, for the basic principle cannot remain sterile and uncreative. But equally if creativity and multiplicity takes place without reference to the unity principle, this is also tantamount to its denial and, in fact, constitutes *kufr*, i. e., rejection of the ultimate principle. In a sense, therefore, total and absolute uncreativity—real Death—is much worse than *kufr*. All that Iqbāl has stated on the subject of the relationship between *‘ishq* and *‘aql* or intuition and reason means just this, viz., that all multiplicity must be organically related to one another and to the unitive principle.

The essence of Iqbāl's appraisal of the West consists in saying that the West is very productive but that its productivity is not related to the ultimate directive principles of life; it is, therefore, spiritually sterile, essentially secular and constitutes *kufr*. The modern West, therefore, presents to Iqbāl an example *par excellence* of secularism, viz., an affirmation of the partial and neglect of the total. His soul, therefore, yearns for a set-up which would not take life partially but synthetically, not divisively but as a whole. But whereas the West appears to him simply secular, the East appears to him semi-dead, for the East has remained uncreative for centuries. In the East, however, the spirit, although dormant, is not partial. And in the entire East it is Islam alone which had actually worked life on a synthetic basis, for it was Islam which had taught the world how positively to weave spiritual values in the nexus of the physical world. In contrast to the more dominant tradition of, e.g., Hinduism, Islam had been more positive towards life and has eschewed escapism. Islam, therefore, is the antidote *par excellence* to secularism, according to Iqbāl. This is why he, not in spite of but rather because of the catholicity of his approach, was led to call the world to Islam. But in calling the world to Islam, he also called the Muslim 'back to Islam'. Because the Muslims, surely, had ceased to be real Muslims when they let go the creative impulse of 'Love' generated by the spiritual ideals of Islam under the impact of the historical forces. The problem was: Is it better and more effective to invite the entire world to Islam or will it be more gainful to concentrate on the people who call themselves Muslims, remind them of the original message and attempt to revitalize them? It seems that Iqbāl worked in both directions. On the one hand, he never relented interest in the world at large but, on the other hand, there is little doubt that he thought it more effective and a short-cut to the realization of his ideal to advocate the solidarity of the Muslims.

But it should be at the same time obvious from the foregoing analysis that Iqbāl's ideal was never simply to re-create the past in an Islamic state. On the contrary, according to him, a state that would be Islamic, would constantly and ceaselessly move towards the future, not towards the past, for to move towards the past would not just be like secularism—a rejection of the ultimate principle—but would constitute a downright negation of it. For nothing in the world moves backwards except in the state of death. Iqbāl's idea, therefore, of an Islamic state is of a state opposed to *secularism* as



he conceives it, but is not of a state constituted on narrow and bigoted lines. His idea of 'secular' and 'religious' is, therefore, essentially very different from what these terms are commonly taken to mean in political philosophy. For in modern political philosophy a religious or a theocratic state is a state run by a priestly class or the 'Church' and a secular state is its opposite. In Iqbal, however, 'religious' and 'secular' are primarily attributes of life, not of a state, and it is in these terms that he understands Muslims' attitude both to life and state. In asserting this, Iqbal seems to us to be justified both on historical and doctrinal grounds. For a state is Islamic or secular according as it is the political and executive organ of a community which is, in its life, either Islamic or secular. These attributes would, therefore, apply to a state derivatively and in a secondary sense.

The primary task of building an Islamic order, therefore, requires the bringing into existence of a Community which would espouse the ideals of Islam, viz., creative and purposeful dynamism. It is true that Iqbal reposed his faith in the actual Muslim Community to undertake this task, i.e., to become a real Muslim Community. To us this strong faith in the role and destiny of the Community is not unjustified but may be termed a 'reasonable faith.' The reason is that the early generations of this Community did undertake such a task in actual history with conspicuous success and that this Community, as it actually exists now, even though it has strayed from the ideal for centuries, still harbours in its breast the spiritual and emotional mechanism which can be re-employed for the realization of the same ideals. Nevertheless, Iqbal's is a *faith* in this Community and he holds out no absolute assurance that the actual Muslim Community will become the real Muslim Community. In this Iqbal is again completely faithful to the teaching of the *Qur'ān* which plainly says to the Muslims that if they fail to undertake this task, "God will bring another people who will not be like you." There seems to us, therefore, no contradiction in Iqbal's universalistic message on the one hand and in his fervent appeals to and unflinching faith in the present Muslim Community.

On the face of it, the contradictions among Iqbal's statements on the subject of democracy are also striking. At first sight, one can hardly believe that a person who could persistently talk about and, in fact, yearn for the appearance of a super-man can be the person

who can also talk of democracy and equality of man. If one wished, one could simply attribute the former to the influence of the Muslim *ṣūfī* tradition reinforced by certain ideas of Nietzsche and the latter an influence of the orthodox Muslim tradition interpreted in modern democratic terms. But as soon as one does so, one begins to feel an uneasiness that this is perhaps too superficial a way of handling the thought of a man who was hardly superficial. One is, therefore, forced to search for some underlying principle which would resolve this apparent contradiction and synthesize its terms. The truth seems to be that Iqbāl believed in a "spiritual democracy of developed individuals." There is little doubt that this must be final aim of the realization of his philosophy, viz., the creation of a society of truly developed and emancipated individuals whose corporate presence would be the unity of such a society. As soon as one realizes this, one can understand why Iqbāl, who praises democracy so much, would nevertheless, not allow absolute democracy of undeveloped individuals, i.e., exercise of total irresponsibility. This is exactly what he meant when he said criticizing the actual modern Western democracy: "Democracy is a system where people are counted but not weighed." It is in this context, then, that a great individual is expected by Iqbāl—a super-man who would develop the potentialities of these undeveloped individuals and, in fact, usher in the true spiritual democracy. But once such a democracy is ushered in, there will be no room for the superman for all would perhaps be supermen.

One may, of course, take exception to the expectation of a superman and say that the days of a superman have gone for ever. It is idle to expect a *Mahdī*. One may reasonably say that the relatively equally undeveloped individuals have to work out their problems themselves and that history seems to point to the fact that it is only in this way that human problems will now be solved and not by the appearance of a superman. One may contend that all that is required is that people should discipline themselves enough to work corporately and that this corporate action would render the expectation for a superman both redundant and futile. One can say all this and admit only the need of equal partnership even of undeveloped men with discipline and proper leadership but all the same one may not accuse Iqbāl of a contradiction. If one thinks along these lines on all the major problems on which Iqbāl has expressed himself in apparently contradictorily terms, there is hope

for a more constructive view of his personality and his teachings to emerge than what has hitherto been generally done. For there is no denying that Iqbāl summed up in his mind all the permanent facets and tensions of life and reality.

## SOCIALIST IDEAS IN THE POETRY OF MUHAMMAD IQBĀL

JAN MAREK

Many of Iqbāl's poems testify to his sincere interest in the teachings of socialism. He was drawn to socialism by the thought of unity and equality of mankind and the principle of the division of material goods according to the needs of the members of the society. On the other hand, Iqbāl was unable to accept a materialistic view of the world and the scientific dialectical methods with which socialism was inevitably linked. In this respect he was influenced by his deep religious faith and undoubtedly also by the influence of his family environment and upbringing.

Iqbāl was one of the first poets of Asia to greet the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. He had already been the first Urdu poet consciously to make general use in his poetry of the term 'capitalist' (*sarmāyahdār*) in contradistinction to 'proletariat' (*nādār*). We are not able, however, to establish that in Europe he engaged in the study of socialist theoretical doctrine, although inasmuch as he devoted himself to the study of many European philosophical trends, it is reasonable to suppose that he read the *Communist Manifesto* and possibly also Marx's *Capital*. At least some of the later poems indicate this. When Soviet power established itself in Russia, Iqbāl reacted with the poem *Sarmāyah wa miḥnat* (Capital and Work)<sup>1</sup> which constitutes part of the cycle *Khidr-i rāh*, 'The Guide on the Journey'.

In this poem, he challenged the working people of the East and the West, with the beginning of a new world epoch in the dawn of the victory of the socialist revolution, to follow the Soviet example and throw off the fetters of capitalism:

*Go and give the enslaved worker my message,  
It is not only the message of Khidr, it is the message out of  
the universe:*

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<sup>1</sup> *Bāng-i darā*, pp 297-299.

*Take heed, you whom the crafty capitalist has swallowed up,  
You whom he has for hundreds of years only deceived.<sup>1</sup>  
The reward which your wealth-creating hands have received,  
Was like the alms the wealthy bestow on the wretched.*

*The conjurer of Alamūt<sup>2</sup> gave you hashīsh  
And you, O foolish one, took it for sugarcane.  
Imperialism understands well how to choose narcotics  
Such as race, nationality, the church, government, culture  
or colour.*

*The artless worker became a victim of imaginary gods,  
And under the influence of narcotics gave away the treasure  
of life.*

*The capitalist won the game with a deceitful move,  
The worker was checkmated having been too guileless.  
Arise, for now the Assembly is set up differently,  
And your age is dawning in the East and the West.  
The high-soaring soul is not content even with the river,  
But you ignorant seem satisfied like the bud with dew-drops.  
Democracy wakes up and sings—you have reason to rejoice.  
How long will you listen to the cradle-song about Alexander  
and Jamshīd?*

*The new sun arose from the bosom of the earth.  
Will you then continue to mourn over the fallen stars?  
It is the nature of man to tear asunder his chains.  
How long will eye of Adam shed tears over the expulsion  
from Paradise?*

*Spring counsels the gardener, versed in treatment,  
How long will you prepare plaster for wounds?  
Let the ignorant moth ceasing to circle the candle  
Settle itself where its luminosity can show itself.*

The upsurge of the Indian national liberation movement after the first World War was accompanied by the development of the strike

<sup>1</sup> *Deceive*: allusion to the Persian saying *barāt-i āshiqār bar shākh i āhū*—the vows of the lover are on the horns of a gazelle, that is, fickle, deceitful.

<sup>2</sup> Conjurer of Alamūt, that is, Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, rapacious chief of the sect of assassins, who in 1091 seized the Persian fortress of Alamūt. In the period of confusion following the fall of the realm of the Seljuks he led a secret organization whose members were called *fidāwī* or *hashīshī* and were, under the influence of narcotic elation, willing to accomplish political murders. In Iqbāl's opinion, the capitalist, similar to Ṣabbāḥ, endeavoured to deceive and charm with the *hashīsh* of mendacious promises.

movement among Indian workers. Poor crops and hunger in 1920 bore heavily upon the Indian people. The strikes gave emphasis to economic demands, but the strike solidarity testified as well to the growth of class consciousness among the proletariat. During the strike struggles the efforts of the workers to achieve their own organization grew. Trade unions came into existence after a decade but because they were essentially only strike committees they did not last long. At that time there did not yet exist a political movement founded on the ideas of socialism, in the concept of the working class and workers' struggle. Despite all obstacles and initial confusion, however, the political consciousness of the working class awakened and was gradually penetrated by socialistic and communistic ideas.

The new character which the Indian national liberation movement assumed in the twenties following the participation of the Indian workman began to be reflected in Iqbāl's poetry in the same decade, especially in some poems in the collection *Payām-i mashriq*. Iqbāl manifested great interest in the situation of the workers and advocated their rights and condemned exploitation. He wholeheartedly supported the principle of creative work, though he supported workmen mostly for humane reasons and his interest did not extend beyond his sympathy for their oppression. His philosophy led him to oppose social inequality, and he condemned accordingly the sharp antithesis represented by the penury of the worker and the profligacy of the master. In *Nawā-i mazdūr* (Song of the Worker)<sup>1</sup> he pointed out that the creator of value—the worker—is unjustly exploited by the master who only idles;

*In rags and tatters I toil like a paid slave,  
So my slothful master can bedeck himself in silk.  
From my sweat the ruler purchases rubies for rings,  
And from my tears the prince with pearls decorates his horse.  
The irreligious clergy fattens like a leech from my blood,  
While the arm of state draws its strength from my arms.  
My tears create and water a rose orchard from the debris,  
With the moisture of my heart tulips and roses flourish.*

The conviction that only creative work of the labourer can lay the basis for a happy life and that the parasite-capitalist is only a

<sup>1</sup> *Payām-i mashriq*, pp 257-258.

burden on the shoulders of humanity is expressed by Iqbāl still more explicitly in the poem *Muḥāwara mā bain-i ḥakīm fransawī Agastas Komt wa mard-i mazdūr* (Dialogue between the French Philosopher Auguste Comte and a Worker):<sup>1</sup>

*The capitalist sits heavily on the shoulders of earth;  
Eating and sleeping he has no work to do and knows no grief.  
The wealth of the world is created alone by the worker's hand.  
Don't you know this capitalist-idler is in fact a thief?*

Iqbāl was led to this judgment by his poetic interpretation of the thought of the French positivist, Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte, as a philosopher of the bourgeoisie, used the battlecry of French Revolution, 'Liberty, equality, fraternity' and held that the human heart passionately longs for the harmonious unity of all members of human society. Iqbāl in an introduction sets forth the basis of Comte's conviction that human society must subordinate nature and its laws which determine the position of each individual and his task so that individual freedom does not have much scope. The worker in his poem criticizes this doctrine of the immutable order of society and criticizes the philosopher who sets for wisdom only one end, namely, the concealment of capitalist exploitation of labour and the proclamation of social inequality as necessary and enduring:

Comte:

*The descendants of Adam constitute a brotherhood,  
They are as branches of a tree, leaves and fruit.  
It is in the nature of things that the brain begets thought,  
And it is also in the nature of things that the foot walks.  
One of us directs work and the other performs—  
The emperor Maḥmūd does not toil instead of his slave Ayāz.  
So you see by the division of labour in life  
The whole patch of bramble is transformed into an orchard.*

Worker:

*You deceive me, O sage, with your learning.  
Do you say that it is not possible to end this ancient curse  
of society?  
You are trying to gild raw copper with words  
If you say I am not fed up with my chains.*

<sup>1</sup> *Payām-i maḥriq*, pp 244-245.





this poem Iqbāl gives rein to his fantasy and portrays Lenin, representative of the socialist revolution and the people's government, as in heaven conversing with the Prussian Emperor William, confirmed defender of absolute power. In the beginning it appears that Iqbāl agrees with Lenin who holds that the people gained a victory over their oppressors:

*Man has long been, in the old seraglio of the world,  
Pressed as grain between millstones.  
The Czar's cunning and the emperor's sorcery victimized him  
And the church ensnared him.  
Did you see the hungry slave who finally ripped  
The shirt of his master, stained with our blood?  
The spark from the fire of the people incinerated the old  
articles—  
The priestly vestures and the emperor's robes.*

Iqbāl lets, however, Emperor William go on to object that in Russia the coming into power of the people did not change very much. He maintained in the spirit of his philosophy that the change of social order merely shifted the power from one representative of worldly government to another. He voiced the view that there is no great difference if the worldly power is wielded by a crowned individual or by the people:

*If the people don the sovereign's crown  
The old disorder in society remains.*

In a rather far-fetched metaphor he compared world power to a handsome mistress who is always courted by someone: if she is not possessed by a crowned monarch she will belong to the working people:

*The charm of Shirīn is not left without a taker;  
If she is not loved by Khusrau, then it will be the mountain-  
digger (Farhād).*

In his further Persian collection, *Zabur-i 'ajam*, published in June 1927, Iqbāl does not advance new ideas. There is, however, in it a deeper unfolding of his philosophy of the Self with emphasis on the significance of mystic Love as the way to a clear revelation of Truth. In almost all of his Urdu *ghazals* there is his conviction that nothing in the world is equal to the believing human heart that is capable of loving God. Only in a few *ghazals* does he extricate

himself from his mystical ecstasy and his philosophic contemplation and views the realities of the life around him. But even here his views are unchanged. As before, he considers the inequitable organization of worldly society as untenable and calls for its change, for revolution.<sup>1</sup>

*The master changes the blood of the worker's veins into clear  
rubies,*

*The cruel landowner destroys the sowing of the peasant.*

*Revolution! Revolution! O revolution!*

*The prince and sultan play at a game of chance with  
loaded dice.*

*They tear the serf soul from body and lull him to sleep.*

*Revolution! Revolution! O revolution!*

Five years later in his best work, *Jāvidnāmah* (1932), writing under the influence of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Iqbāl seriously devoted his attention to the political and social problems of the contemporary world. *Jāvidnāmah* is also the only Persian collection of poems in which Iqbāl summarily expressed his opinions on capitalism and socialism, on their merits and deficiencies. Over-emphasis on the spiritual side of life led Iqbāl to believe that capitalism and socialism are basically the same. He believed they are alike in their irreligiousness and their excessive concern for the material needs of man.<sup>2</sup>

*Both (systems) have an impatient and intolerant soul,*

*Neither knows God and both deceive man.*

*One takes life to mean output, the other takes it to mean the  
accumulation of gains.*

*Man is like glass between these two stones.*

*Socialism brings the rout of science, religion and art,*

*Capitalism detaches the soul from the body and from the  
arm takes bread.*

*Both systems bring me at last to water and clay,*

*Both have a light body and a dark heart.*

Along with his condemnation of socialism as a materialistic and infidel social order, Iqbāl respected the founder of scientific socialism, Karl Marx. He points to him as the prophet, the herald of a new

<sup>1</sup> *Zabūr-i 'ajam*, pp 134-135.

<sup>2</sup> *Jāvidnāmah*, p. 70.

order founded on the equality of all peoples and in his *Capital* he sees a kind of religious book in which are contained the principles of a new and just organization of society. He thought, that is to say, that in Marx's teachings there is an unconscious, hidden truth, namely the Islamic principles of equality of all people before God—a truth hidden there despite the fact that Marx's social system is materialistic and he does not acknowledge God. Iqbāl referred to Marx sometimes as the prophet who does not know the truth. He says of him, for instance:<sup>1</sup>

*The author of 'Capital' comes of the tribe of Abraham.  
He is a prophet, without Gabriel,  
For in his error there is a hidden truth.  
With the heart he is a believer, with the brain a heretic.  
The people of the West have lost the heaven,  
They seek the pure soul in the stomach.  
The pure soul does not receive colour and fragrance from  
the body,  
But socialism has no concern other than with the body.  
The religion of this prophet who does not know the Truth  
Is founded on the equality of stomachs.*

In his mystical travel Iqbāl met with the Afghān preacher of pan-Islamism, Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī. He exhorted him to transmit his message to the Russian people who in the Soviet Union are bringing about what Iqbāl considered to be the purpose of Islam. This message was limited to one, but for Iqbāl, a very important challenge: Let the Russian people who got rid of capitalism, disposed of monarchy and did away with the exploitation of man by man, leave materialism, turn to God and take the advice offered by the principles of Islam:<sup>2</sup>

*O you, who installed another order  
And turned the heart away from the old law,  
Who broke the bones of despotism,  
Even as we Muslims, in the world,  
Take counsel from our gad-fly  
In order to kindle the lamp in your heart.*

Iqbāl was convinced that a society of the socialist type which realized in work the principle of equality of all people cannot be infidel. It

<sup>1</sup> *Jāvidnāmha*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp 87-88.

seemed to him that the time was not far off when this society would recognize Allāh as its highest Ruler.

Iqbāl did not know socialist doctrines in detail and at no time made a deep study of them. He was content with the indefinite proposition that in socialism the necessities of life are divided equally. He tried to show that socialism has much in common with the teachings of the *Qur'ān* which emphasized the equality of all people. He emphasized the social aspects of Islam and often cited the verses in the *Qur'ān* which criticize masters, riches or miserliness, champion the cause of slaves and urge the distribution of alms. He paraphrased many times, for instance, the following verse:

And they ask thee what they should spend. Say: The Surplus.<sup>1</sup>

In this regard he said that the well-to-do Muslim should retain of his property only so much as he needs for his livelihood; the rest he should distribute to those who are unable to meet their needs from their own resources:<sup>2</sup>

*Allah said to the Muslims "Let the soul use your hands,  
Whatever you have over your needs, give!"*

Iqbāl thus advanced the ideal of religious charitable activity, dependent on the goodwill of the propertied individual, on the principle of the just division of social goods according to merit. He tried to show that the ideas of scientific socialism, first put into practice in the Soviet Union, are similar to principles of the *Qur'ān* and that it would, for the Russian people, not be difficult to adhere to the *Qur'ān* as the law of God. But he clearly did not take his argument seriously and definitely did not mean to induce the people of the Soviet Union to shift over to Islam. It was rather a way of showing vividly that social principles such as are contained in the *Qur'ān* can be applied in practice in modern times.

With the new upsurge of the Indian freedom movement in the thirties Iqbāl developed a new interest in the teachings of socialism and workers' problems. News from the Soviet Union was not so limited as in the twenties, and the Indian intelligentsia was still better informed about the progress of the young Soviet state. In 1933, the Communist Party was established in India, unifying earlier

<sup>1</sup> *Qur'ān* 2:219.

<sup>2</sup> *Jāvidnāmah*, p. 91.

Communist groups scattered in the various provinces. Its influence remained limited to a relatively small circle of people. It could not influence the mass of workers because it was, in July 1934, declared illegal.

Iqbāl at that time became acquainted with the personality and works of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, leader of the October Socialist Revolution. The well-known and often cited poem 'Lenin Before God' testifies to his respect for Lenin.<sup>1</sup>

In it, Iqbāl presents Lenin as the world leader and representative of the working classes. In his fantasy he represents Lenin as standing, after death, before Allāh in the heavenly court of justice reciting all of the grief and anger of the workers and their embitterment and exasperation under the injustices and exploitation of the world capitalistic system:

*Science, sagacity, speculation and power  
Suck blood and mouthe the doctrine of equality.  
Unemployment, beggary, drunkenness and penury—  
Are these some of the triumphs of European civilization?  
God, Thou art powerful and just, but in Thy world  
The days of the worker are bitter indeed!  
When will this argosy of capitalism sink?  
Thy world awaits the day of retribution!*

The angels, hearing Lenin speak in Paradise, pointed out that capitalism converts the subjects of God into slaves of wealthy individuals. Allāh, then, after Lenin's speech and after the intercession of the angels, considered the entire situation and issued the command to the angels that they desotry the property of the rich, demolish their fields and improve the lot of the simple servant of God:<sup>2</sup>

*Arise and awaken the poor of my world,  
Shake the walls and gates in the palaces of the emirs.  
With the ardour of faith, warm the blood of slaves  
And let the miserable sparrow fight the eagle!  
The era of democratic rule is near.  
Go and destroy all of the old images you see!  
Burn every blade of wheat in the fields  
From which the peasant does not harvest!*

<sup>1</sup> *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, pp 144-147.

<sup>2</sup> *Farman-i khudā, Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 149.

Lenin's speech before God and Allāh's conversation with the angels still cannot be considered a call for the fall of capitalism by revolution. But the fact that Lenin, representative of the socialist state, advocates the rights of the workers and condemns the abuses of capitalism, turned the attention of Muslims to the doctrines of socialism. Poems of this character convince the reader at least that the end of abuses is an inevitable and necessary solution.

Also, in the further collection, *Ḍarb-i Kalīm*, Iqbāl sometimes invokes the Marxist-Leninist classics in order to criticize the social order of Western Europe. He attacks, for instance, using Marx as spokesman, the *bourgeois* economists who consciously conceal the exploitative structure of society. He accuses science of being subservient to the interests of the governing classes. In the poem, 'The Voice of Karl Marx', the founder of Marxism says of the bourgeois economists:<sup>1</sup>

*This chess-like game of science, discussion and disputation  
Shows obsolete thinking hated by the world.*

*What, economists, have you in reality stowed away in your  
erudite books?*

*A chaos of graphs! Evasions and quibbles!!*

*In the colleges and the idolatrous places of the West*

*Science, itself avaricious, conceals the blood shed by  
the greedy.*

Although in the thirties Iqbāl devoted steady attention to socialism, his interest in it stemmed from his consistent religious conviction that the economic principles of socialism are identical with the doctrine of the *Qur'ān*. He believed that Islam and socialism have the same end: to secure to the sustenance of all people. In his views there occurred no essential change—as earlier he replaced the scientific social system for religious charitable activity prescribed by Islam which cannot remove the roots of inequality. In the poem, 'Socialism',<sup>2</sup> he again referred to the oft-cited verse of the *Qur'ān*:

And they ask thee what they should spend. Say: The Surplus.<sup>3</sup>

*From the behaviour of nations it appears to me*

*That the rapid progress of Russia is not without gain....*

<sup>1</sup> *Ḍarb-i Kalīm*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> 2:219.

*Perhaps at this time it demonstrates the truth  
That is hidden in the words: "Say: The Surplus."*

As the principal inadequacy of the socialistic order in Russia, Iqbāl pointed to its atheism although, on the other hand, he admitted that the Soviet Union accomplishes to a certain extent the unconscious work of God. Its anti-religiousness derived from the abuses and corruption of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the poem, 'Bolshevik Russia', declared:<sup>1</sup>

*Those who thought that the preservation of the church will  
bring them salvation  
Were destined to be the instruments of its destruction.  
In Russian atheism there was sent a divine inspiration:  
Disorganize the old heathen idols of the bigots!*

Iqbāl admitted that he did not know the economic and social characteristics of the better society for which he yearned. In reality he knew neither the details nor the most general features of this society. He believed it should rest on the foundations of brotherhood and social justice. He was dissatisfied with the existing state of society and longed for its change. He often invoked revolution but did not know how it should be brought about. For him revolution was an obscure mystic force which issued from the unknown and transformed the world. He spoke of it always only symbolically. Nowhere does he say that revolution is the necessary component of social development nor does he explain which class should be its bearer.

The criticism of all forms of abuse and the exploitation of man by man, the critiques of the capitalistic order and a human compassion for the workers are in Iqbāl's writings accompanied by an unswerving faith in the installation of an idyllic relation between peoples and the conviction that a theocratic form of government is necessary. Strong religious faith rendered Iqbāl incapable of dissociating himself from the ideology of his class and giving his poetry to the service of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, as did some of his Muslim contemporaries (for instance, the 'Poet of the Revolution', Jōsh Malībādī), who were better qualified for this work. Iqbāl was never a leader of the people. He was a poet, intellectual and philosopher, emotionally linked to the old feudal order, on whose foundations he wished to build an ideal social future. He felt

<sup>1</sup> *Ḍarb-i Kalām*, p. 143.

strongly about the oppression of the working people but he remained far above them. He often criticized social inequality and condemned the capitalistic order in which this inequality inured. However, in practice he intervened to ensure the undisturbed development of capitalist undertaking. In the beginning of the thirties he called for the creation of an independent territory for Indian Muslims (later the demand of Pakistan) and a real demarcation of the sphere of influence for the undisturbed capitalist undertaking of members of the Muslim *bourgeoisie*.

Here was displayed the basic inconsistency which was characteristic of Iqbāl's life and his philosophy. We have here an inconsistency which was inherent not alone in his individuality but characterized his period. As a poet and thinker, Iqbāl stood at the dividing line of two epochs—the old feudal society and modern capitalism. He stemmed partially from both, but in ideas he clung to the former, while practically he clung rather to the latter. The unceasing disharmony between theory and practice was thus a reflection of the inconsistency of two historical epochs. Socialism was in his time the ideology of the next new period in human history, the ideology of a social class which he did not know and did not trust. Socialistic doctrine remained on the borderline of his interests. Iqbāl was a typical representative of the Indian *bourgeoisie* and above all of the Muslim middle class intelligentsia. In his poetry, he expressed their longings and requirements and gave them the ideals which served their objective needs. He succeeded in a measure in hastening the passage of the Indian Muslims from feudalism to a bourgeois society, and thus indirectly in preparing the ground for those who will bring together the ideas for a realization of socialism.



## IQBĀL AND MYSTICISM

SYED VAHIDUDDIN

Iqbāl's name is intimately associated with an activistic philosophy of life, a personalistic metaphysical perspective and a dynamic approach to Islam. As an inevitable corollary of his world-perspective and *Weltanschauung*, he has adopted a very cautious attitude in relation to the mystic trend in Islam, and it often seems as if for him the development of an esoteric structure known as *ṣūfism* has been nothing but a decadent phenomenon wholly incompatible with the original ethos of Islam. Thus he observes:

The present-day Muslim prefers to roam about aimlessly in the dusky valleys of Hellenic-Persian mysticism which teaches us to shut our eyes to the hard Reality around, and to fix our gaze on what it describes as "Illuminations"—blue, red and yellow Reality springing up from the cells of an overworked brain. To me this self-mystification, this Nihilism, *i.e.*, seeking Reality in quarters where it does not exist, is a physiological symptom which gives me a clue to the decadence of the Muslim world. The intellectual history of the ancient world will reveal to you this most significant fact that the decadent in all ages have tried to seek shelter behind self-mystification and Nihilism. Having lost the vitality to grapple with the temporal, these prophets of decay apply themselves to the quest of a supposed eternal; and gradually complete the spiritual impoverishment and physical degeneration of their society by evolving a seemingly charming ideal of life which seduces even the healthy and powerful to death! To such a peculiarly constructed society of Islam the work of these sentimental obscurantists has done immense harm. Our birth, as a society repudiating the ideas of race and language as principles of social reconstruction, was due only to our subjecting ourselves to a system of Law believed to be Divine in its origin; yet the old mystic frankly held and secretly preached it to be merely phenomenal; nothing more than an outer husk of the Real which is to be attained by means other than the Law of God.<sup>1</sup>

Now the introduction of mystic elements in Islam was assessed as the Persianization of Islam which could not but undermine the religious foundations which were laid thirteen hundred years ago in 'the desert sunshine of Arabia'. It is not improbable that Iqbāl was at first sympathetically inclined towards mysticism, even in its pantheistic expression, as many of his early verses and his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* clearly bear witness. This shift in Iqbāl's attitude corresponds to another ideological transformation, and this is from

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<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, edited with Notes by Syed Abdul Wahid, pp 80-81.

fervent nationalism to Islamic cosmopolitanism. What made Iqbāl's sharp reaction to nationalism was the aggressive expression of national consciousness in the political life of Europe in the last few decades and which led to global disasters of unprecedented magnitude. That the love of the country in which he was born persisted throughout his life is dramatically shown in the moving lamentations of the Soul of India in his *Jāvid-nāmah*, in his passionate admiration for the great Indian martyr, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, and his vision of Mīr Ja'far of Bengal and Šādiq of Deccan as 'vile spirits' who betrayed their country and whom Hell refuses to accept. Thus, in order to be fair to Iqbāl we must always bear in mind the fact that what he rejects he does not reject as a universal phenomenon but only in its particular determination and in one of its characteristic manifestations. Is it not true that his own guide and main source of inspiration has been one of the greatest figures in the history of *šūfism*, Maulānā Jalāl-al-Dīn Rūmī? There have been occasional appreciative references to other masters of *šūfism*, like Sanā'i, 'Irāqī and others. He has drawn inspiration from Maḥmūd Shabistarī and has paid glowing tributes to *šūfī* saints who lie buried in the Indian sub-continent. It was, however, his incisive criticism of Ḥāfiz in the first edition of *Asrār-i khūdī* that brought him in sharp conflict with the traditional form of *šūfism*. Here it is that *šūfism* is expressly equated with the pantheistic perspective, with the view which does not allow the perservation of individuality and personality, which negates life with all its colourful diversity of the senses. Consequently, Iqbāl's vehement reaction against *šūfism* has some sound reasons. The *šūfis* are not at home in this world and their ecstatic absorption does not seem to leave any room for personality and action. *Šūfism* becomes as much an opiate for the masses as religion is for the leftist ideologist. Life for Iqbāl is perpetual flux and ever young. Iqbāl's criticism of Plato moves on the same lines:

*The Soul of the šūfī bows to his authority:  
He soared with his intellect to the highest heaven  
And called the world of phenomena a myth.  
'Twas his work to dissolve the structure of Life  
And cut the bough of Life's fair tree.*

And again:

*Dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit:  
Its gazelles have no grace of movement,  
Its partridges are denied the pleasure of walking daintily.*

*Its dew-drops are unable to quiver,  
Its birds have no breath in their breasts,  
Its seed does not desire to grow,  
Its moths do not know how to flutter.*<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the fact that it was not Plato but Plotinus who influenced in some way the development of speculative mysticism in Islam, the critique of Platonism is hardly pertinent. Asceticism is indeed an 'oriental' phenomenon and foreign to the spirit of Greek culture. Plato was not an ascetic who flew from life and toil to the transcendental world of immutable realities, but who wanted to make the vision of the seer effective in the world of becoming. His absorption in the higher world did not deter him from developing a profound philosophy of the State and of education with equal emphasis on the development of body and mind. Iqbāl's criticism of Ḥāfiẓ is equally uncalled for. It is true we cannot hope to find in Ḥāfiẓ any consciousness of struggle and tension. But with the *Qur'ān* as his never-failing guide and with divine grace as his refuge, Ḥāfiẓ is fully prepared to weather the storm of life. His future has always pleasant surprises in store, and though his heart might seem to sink under the pressure of circumstances, hope never leaves him. Paradoxically enough, Goethe, in whom Iqbāl found a kindred soul, stood enchanted for long under the spell of Ḥāfiẓ and himself wrote lyrics of unparalleled beauty in the spirit of the great lyrical genius of Iran in his *Westöstlicher Diwan*. But Goethe was a man of many facets, and what attracted Iqbāl in him was his perpetual zest for life and action. In one of the famous passages of *Faust*, action is accorded ontological priority over Love and Word. This action-oriented world-view of Goethe must have influenced even Fichte in the development of one of his own philosophical phases. Goethe did not stick to any one phase of human experience, but wanted to live life in all its fulness and to experience it in all its diversity. Iqbāl tried, however, to make his poetry the vehicle of a consistent outlook and the bearer of a message. Characteristically enough, he has called the collection of the verses written under the inspiration of Goethe's *Westöstlicher Diwan* the Message of the East, *Pyam-i mashriq*.

There is nothing to argue against mysticism if it is nothing but an inward aspect of religion. What made Iqbāl suspicious of mysticism

<sup>1</sup> *Jāvid-nāmah*, tr. by A.J. Arberry, pp 106-7.

was the development of speculation in terms of Neo-Platonic Metaphysics. Thus he observes:

Mysticism has, no doubt, revealed fresh regions of the self by making a special study of this experience. Its literature is illuminating; yet its set phraseology shaped by the thought-forms of a worn out metaphysics has rather a deadening effect on the modern mind. The quest after a nameless nothing, as disclosed in Neo-Platonic mysticism—be it Christian or Muslim—cannot satisfy the modern mind which, with its habits of concrete thinking, demands a concrete living experience of God. And the history of the race shows that the attitude of the mind embodied in the act of worship is a condition for such an experience.<sup>1</sup>

But mysticism has other dimensions. The Western students of mysticism have often identified it with its pantheistic expression and have tended to distinguish it from religious experience. Hence it is often held that religion presupposes some form of duality while mysticism transcends or cancels all dualities. For Iqbāl, the greatest dichotomy is constituted by the prophetic and mystic consciousness, and of this we will speak later. Of mysticism he is aware that it has different levels and is not exhausted in any monistic identity of the individual with the Absolute. Hence, when Iqbāl resists the mystic trend in Islam, he has in view the type of mysticism which is identified with the unqualified monism of Shankara's *Advaita Vedānta*. Iqbāl was also not ignorant of the fact that there are standards of Vedantic thought which come nearer to his own view of Reality. But Iqbāl is not careful to delimit the area of his attack and it would seem as if the whole of mysticism is the target of his criticism. In his *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* he gives a detailed and by no means unsympathetic critique of mystic experience. In Iqbāl's analysis mystic experience blends completely with religious experience. Hence what he questions is not experience itself but the conclusions drawn from it. In Iqbāl's appraisal of mystic experience a few principal characteristics are emphasized. Mystic experience is marked by immediacy, a quality which it shares with all other experiences. It is as much subject to interpretation as any other region of normal experience. It has a wholeness which cannot be analyzed. It is for the mystic "a moment of intimate association with a unique other self, transcending, encompassing and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject of experience." It is incommunicable. The serial time appears to him unreal even though no decisive disengagement from serial time takes place. Thus

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<sup>1</sup> Iqbāl, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 124. Lahore, 1930.

it is clear that Iqbāl is not averse to mystic experience as such. Indeed, he considers it objective in its content and decisively rejects the view according to which it is a retreat into 'pure subjectivity'.

It is clear that Iqbāl is not critical of mysticism as an experience, but only as monistic metaphysics, especially as it was formulated and developed by the most influential *ṣūfī* school of Ibn 'Arabī. It was only with his doctrine of the Unity of Being, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, that he could not reconcile himself. Indeed, Islamic orthodoxy also constantly wavered between outright rejection and conditional reconciliation. That Iqbāl himself was at one time drawn to pantheistic mysticism is referred to by Dr McTaggart in a personal letter to the poet:

Have you not changed your position very much? Surely, in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more of a Pantheist and mystic.<sup>1</sup>

But the clearer he became of his concept of *khūdī* the deeper the gulf widened between him and the monistic pattern of *ṣūfī* thought. In his appraisal of Ibn 'Arabī, Iqbāl vacillates between uncompromising condemnation and sympathetic appreciation. At one time Ibn 'Arabī's position appeared to him as 'sheer heresy'. Occasionally, however, his references are sympathetic and the great Shaikh is quoted for support and with approval. That God should be called a 'percept' and not a concept, that *dahr* should be taken as one of the manifest names of God, finds a positive response in Iqbāl. But it is true that in spite of Ibn 'Arabī's insistence on the never vanishing difference between the Creator and the created, there have been ecstatic expressions of Absolute identity by many a prominent *ṣūfī*. It is significant that religious consciousness has itself moved persistently between transcendence and immanence, and within the framework of major religions it has opted either for a personalistic or the impersonalistic vision of Reality. Indeed the question of identity and difference has led to a serious split in the Vedantic context of thought.

As far as the *ṣūfī* perspective in Islam is concerned, the diversity of theoretical postures is not something new. The tension between sobriety (صحو) and intoxication (سكر) has always existed and simultaneously with the ecstatic utterance of Bāyazīd we have a sober and restrained type of *ṣūfism* whose classical representative is Junaid. But to Mujaddid goes the credit for having been the first in India to have seen the dangers inherent in a type of *ṣūfism* which is apt to

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<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 118.

liberate itself from the restraints of orthodoxy and *sharī'a* on the basis of its own assumed experience of Unity of Being. With his view of *shuhūd* he has reduced the experience of unity into a purely subjective experience which cannot allow us to develop an ontological thesis on its foundation. The experience of unity is a passing phase. What is higher is the experience of transcendence of God as absolutely beyond and ever beyond. But the schools of Mujaddid and Ibn 'Arabī have lost much of their antagonism, thanks to the efforts of Sīlāh Wāṭallāh of Delhi, and some reconciliation has been worked out. Seen deeper even in Mujaddid's perspective the finite existence becomes a *dhill* or shadow and cannot claim any autonomous status. With only a shift of accent the sharpness of difference is lost.

The conflicting positions of the schools of Ibn 'Arabī and Mujaddid appear in another controversial issue of mystic theology. Ibn 'Arabī had accorded to sainthood (*wilāya*) an excellence which is superior to Prophethood (*nubūwa*) and this way of thought sought support in the *Qur'ānic* story which narrates the encounter of Moses with a mysterious figure who carried knowledge from God's own presence. The orthodoxy has not however recognized the higher status of the unknown stranger—who is later identified with Kḥidr—on the basis of his access to divine mysteries. According to at least Sunni orthodoxy a saint, however great he might be, cannot claim any autonomous status and he is as much bound by the prophetic revelation as anyone else. Mujaddid expressly affirms that sainthood shines by the Prophetic light alone and by no light of its own. An attempt was made subsequently even in the school of Ibn 'Arabī to reconcile the doctrine of the precedence of sainthood over prophecy by an ingenious *via media*. It is assumed that every prophet has two dimensions, the prophetic and the saintly, and it is not sainthood as such but the saintly dimension of prophecy which has precedence over the Prophetic dimension.

With Iqbāl the dichotomy of the Prophethood and sainthood corresponded to the conflict of the prophetic and mystic consciousness. These categories became exclusive to such an extent that he was led to call the Prophet 'the first critical observer of the psychic phenomena'! Iqbāl quotes the Muslim saint 'Abd al-Quddūs of Gangoh as saying that if he had reached the Highest Heaven like the Prophet he would not have cared to return. Iqbāl's comment is very illuminating. He writes:

In the whole range of Sufi literature it will probably be difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute percep-

tion of the psychological difference between the prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself in the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic, the repose of 'unitary experience' is final; for the prophet it is awakening within him of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely overhaul the world of concrete fact . . . . A prophet may be defined as a type of mystic consciousness in which 'unitary experience' tends to overflow its boundaries, and seeks opportunities of re-directing or re-fashioning the forces of collective life.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that Iqbāl, who has often seemed to think of prophetic and mystic consciousness as hostile manifestations of religious life, could not but concede that even the prophetic consciousness is a type of mystic consciousness. But the older controversy to the priority of sainthood over prophethood has a characteristic significance which is intelligible only in the Islamic framework of mystic theology. A mystic requires much more specific determination to become a *walī* or a saint. Unlike Mujaddid, Iqbāl was not as much interested in the preservation of the Law as in the preservation of what he called *khūdī*. A pattern of experiences which threatens personality is bound to cripple action and paralyse the forces of life. Life's affirmation and not its negation becomes for Iqbāl the ultimate human value. He writes in a letter to Nicholson:

What then is life? It is individual. Its highest form, so far, is the Ego (*khūdī*) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre.<sup>2</sup>

No wonder that once he has settled his accounts with the 'unitarian' *ṣūfīs* he parts company with Mujaddid. Strikingly enough, he does not go for spiritual sustenance to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, who stand closer to prophetic consciousness in the mystic perspective of Mujaddid, but to 'Aīī ibn Abī Ṭālib who is the prototype of mystic piety and the mainspring of sainthood in Islamic tradition.<sup>3</sup> When

<sup>1</sup> *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp 173-4.

<sup>2</sup> *The Secrets of The Self*, tr. by R.A. Nicholson, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> اے مباحی نقش باطل من اے فاتح خیبر دل من  
اے سر خط وجوب وامکان تفسیر تو سورہ ہامے قرآن  
ازھوش شدم مگر بہ ہوشم گوی کہ نصیری خموش  
*Bāqiyāt-i Iqbāl*, p. 102.

we come to *Jāvid-nāmah*, we find complete Iqbāl's emancipation from theological restraints. In his journey through the spheres under the guidance of Rūmī, he meets Hindu sages and figures of non-Islamic religiosity on an equal footing. The inclusion of Mahatma Buddha in the camp of the prophets is all the more striking since Gautma's is not a God-oriented perspective. Indeed, Iqbāl's Heaven is much more accommodating to 'aliens' than Dante's was to non-Christian dignitaries. But we must not forget one thing. Whereas for Dante symbol and Reality blended together, Iqbāl's Heaven and Hell are created purposely to function as symbols.

But those who are not themselves wayfarers on the mystic path might remain in a state of indecision. We cannot say what preservation of self in the ultimate union would mean and what its annihilation would amount to. We cannot also say whether the experience of transcendence is higher or whether that of absolute absorption is much more fundamental. The transcendent itself is inexhaustible and different interpretations can only be conditioned by limitations of the human perspective. Even Iqbāl, who began with so much zest for life and action, for toil and struggle, was driven to admit in the end that ultimately neither Time nor Space has any reality before the all-abiding presence of Allah:

ہے زمان نہ مکان لا الہ الا اللہ



### THREE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF IQBĀL

K. A. NIZAMI

The following three letters of Iqbāl, preserved in the archives of the Registrar's Office at Aligarh, show Iqbāl's association with the Aligarh Muslim University and his interest in its academic affairs.

On January 14, 1934, Iqbāl wrote the following letter to Sir Ross Masood, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University:

*Dr. Sir Mohd. Iqbal, Kt.*

*M.A., Ph.D.*

*Barrister-at-Law,*

*Lahore.*

14th Jan. 1934.

My dear Masood,

I understand that the post of the Dean of Shia Theology has fallen vacant in the Aligarh University and that you are now thinking of filling it up. As I am very much interested in Theology I would like to make a suggestion in this connection and hope that you will excuse my interference. I want to suggest the name of M. Sayyid Sibt Nabi of Naugaon who studied Shia Theology at Najf for about 14 years. To my knowledge he is one of the most learned of our theologians of today and besides his great learning he lives a noble life worthy of a great Muslim. He is a man of broad vision and in every respect fit for a modern University of Islam. I have no doubt that you will not be able to find a better man for the post. Please give your best consideration to him.

As to the other matter things are a bit hopeful. I do not know whether you thought it fit to see the Viceroy in this connection.

Yours sincerely,  
Mohammad Iqbal

The vacancy to which Iqbāl has referred had been created on account of the death of Maulawī Sayyid Yūsuf Husain Najafī on December 16, 1933. It appears that Sir Ross Masood accepted Iqbāl's recommendation and appointed Maulawī Sayyid Sibt-i Nabī as *Shī'ā* Dean and Lecturer (Grade I).<sup>1</sup>

Sir Ross Masood tendered his resignation of the Office of Vice-Chancellor to the Court of the University on April 30, 1934 and left for Europe. His resignation was formally accepted with effect

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the calender year 1934, p. 3.*

D. Sir Mohd. Iqbal, Kt  
K. A. P. D.

Barrister at Law,

Lahore.

14<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1934

(14) II

My Dear Messrs,

I understand that the post of the Dean of Shia  
Theology has fallen vacant in the Majlis unani,  
as that you are now thinking of filling it up  
As I am very much interested in Theology, I  
would like to make a suggestion in this connection  
I hope that you will excuse my interference  
I want to suggest the name of Mr. Suggid Githi  
of Mangalore who studied Shia Theology at Najaf  
for about 14 years. To my knowledge he is one  
of the best learned of our Theologians of today.  
Under his great learning he has a noble  
life worthy of a great Muslim. He is a man  
broad vision & in every respect fit for a higher  
employment. Of India I have no doubt that you  
will not be able to find a better man for  
the post. Please give your best consideration to  
him.

As to the other matter there was a bit  
misapprehension I do not know whether you thought  
it fit to see the Secretary in this connection

Yours sincerely  
Muhammad Iqbal

### THREE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF IQBĀL

from October 1, 1934. Nawāb Muḥammad Ismā'īl Khan acted as Vice-Chancellor till November 25, 1934.

Some time in July 1934 the Registrar (Mr. 'Aẓmat Ilāhī Zubairī) wrote to Iqbāl to serve on a Selection Committee for the post of Reader and Chairman in Urdu. On July 31, 1934, Iqbāl thus acknowledged the Registrar's letter:

*Dr. Sir Mohd. Iqbal Kt.,  
M.A., Ph.D., LL.D.,  
Barrister-at-Law.*

*Lahore  
Dated.....193  
31st July, 1934*

Dear Sir,

Thanks for your letter.

I am at present suffering from a bad throat and find it difficult to travel. If, however, you can make an exception in my case and send me the names of the candidates with their academic qualifications and description of their literary activities, I shall be glad to record my opinion. If this is not possible then I am afraid you will have to wait till I am in a fit condition to travel. I hope to be well till the end of Aug. 1934.

Yours truly,  
Mohammad Iqbal

In his official note, the Registrar wrote as follows to the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Nawāb Muḥammad Ismā'īl Khan, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, R. B. Ramsbotham: "I think we may send the statement of qualifications etc. of the 8 applicants whom we are calling for interview. For instructions." The P. V. C. wrote: "I agree with the Registrar," and the V. C. remarked: "I also agree with the Registrar. Statement may be sent."

Iqbāl recommended to this post the distinguished Urdu scholar, Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣiddiqī. Iqbāl's recommendatory letter reads as follows:

*Registrar Muslim University,  
Aligarh.*

*Lahore  
7th Aug., 1934*

Dear Sir,

I enclose my opinion of the candidates for the posts of Readership and Lectureship in Urdu.

Yours truly,  
Mohammad Iqbal

M. Sir Mahid Iqbal, Kt.  
24th July 1924  
Government House

(76)

012 Lahore  
Dated \_\_\_\_\_ 1924

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3589  
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31<sup>st</sup> July 1924

(14) I

Dear Sir,

Thanks for your letter.  
I am at present answering from a bad throat  
& find it difficult to read. If, however,  
you can write an exception in my case &  
send me the names of the candidates with their  
academic qualifications & description of their  
literary activities I shall be glad to record  
my opinion. By this is not possible then?  
I am afraid you will have to wait till I am  
in a fit condition to read. I hope to be  
well till the end of Aug 1924

Yours truly  
M. Iqbal

A.V.C.  
and  
P.V.C.

I will be very glad  
to state that I have received  
the 8 applicants whom we are  
calling for interview. In instruction  
Amolans  
1/10/24

I am particularly  
pleased to hear that  
you are writing to  
me with  
interest  
2/10/24

Recd. 1.11.  
Encl.  
2.2.24.

W. 1/11/24

I am very glad to hear  
that you are writing to  
me with  
interest  
2/10/24

OPINION

A. Readership

For Readership I unhesitatingly vote for Rashid Ahmed Siddiqi (No. 34 in your list). He has always struck me as a prose writer and critic of great promise. His prose has a kind of quiet humour and freshness which I hardly find in his contemporaries of the younger school. This judgment is based on my personal knowledge of himself and his writings. In my opinion no other candidate comes up to R. Ahmad.

B. Lectureship

For lectureship only four names should be considered, *i.e.* (No. 6, 16, 20, 26 in your list). I am personally inclined to choose Sayyid Ali Ahsan (No. 16). He is now 57 having given the best part of his life to the study of Urdu. I think he has proved a success as a lecturer in Urdu. It is a pity that he has no knowledge of English; and I fear other members of the committee may not agree with me. If they cannot see their way to agree with me then, in my opinion, the choice lies between three persons—Jalil Ahmad Qidwai, Mohammad Yahya Tanha and Agha Mohammad Ashraf, *i.e.* No. 6, 20, 26 in your list. Agha Mohammad Ashraf seems promising but he is too young yet for a post of this kind. Of the remaining two I prefer Jalil Ahmad Qidwai.

Mohammad Iqbal  
7th Aug. 1934

The Annual Report of the University for the year 1934 (*p.* 2) shows that the University appointed Mr Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣiddīqī 'Reader and Chairman' of the Department of Urdu, and Maulawī Sayyid 'Alī Aḥsan as Lecturer Grade I and Mr Jalīl Aḥmad Qidwā'ī as Lecturer Grade II.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Muhammad Usman: *Asrār wa rumūz par ek nazar*, 189 pp. Karachi: Iqbāl Academy, Rs. 4.50.

Iqbāl was a great poet, but he was no less a philosopher. His positive contribution to the field of knowledge is his Philosophy of Ego. As a matter of fact, he was, from the very beginning, influenced by the famous mystic poet Maulānā Rūmī and his immortal *Mathnawī*. Maulānā Rūmī has, in his famous work, tried to highlight the importance of man *vis-a-vis* this world. He talks of mysticism, other-worldiness, paradise, inferno and a number of other things, but his feet are essentially on the earth. His conclusions are derived from the *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth* and he has tried to interpret these two basic sources of Islamic knowledge with the help of appropriate anecdotes and similies. In this task he has acquitted himself so effectively that his *Mathnawī* has rightly become a bedrock of Islamic teachings. Iqbāl was, from the very beginning, attracted towards mysticism, due probably to his teacher Mīr Ḥasan. He had a contemplative mind, and seeds sown by Mīr Ḥasan sprouted in due course in the form of his Philosophy of Ego. He expressed these ideas in a concrete form in his two well-known *mathnawīs* — *Asrār-i khūdī* and *Rumūz-i bīkhūdī*. The first deals entirely with the enunciation of his theory of Ego. With the help of various anecdotes and events drawn from history and legend, he expands his theme of what a man should be and how he should behave in a certain milieu. The poem was first published in 1914. Four years later, in 1918, he published the second *mathnawī*, viz. *Rumūz-i bīkhūdī*. The canvas of the second poem is wider: in it, besides an elaboration of his philosophy of Ego, he has also dealt with his ideas about nationalism. It is no exaggeration to say that in the whole canvas of Iqbāl's thought these two poems constitute the text, and all that he wrote during the rest of his life was a detailed commentary on the ideas expressed therein. These two poems are, therefore, of fundamental importance in understanding the teachings of Iqbāl.

Prof. Muhammad Usman has discussed at considerable length the significance of the ideas expressed by Iqbāl in these two *mathnawīs*. He has divided his dissertation into two parts: the first is entitled 'Individual' and the second 'Nation'. In the first part, the individuality of a person, his ego, the object of creation, assertion and negation of self, *jihād* as propounded by Islam, and several other topics have been discussed in detail. In the second chapter, the author tries to bring out the meaning of nationhood as envisaged by Islam. Iqbāl has asserted that Islam does not recognize the idea of a nation being connected with any particular country. He was of the opinion that Muslims, wherever they might reside on the face of this earth, constituted one nation. During his lifetime he was in fact involved in a controversy on this subject with the late Maulānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī of Deoband. Iqbāl's viewpoint is actually the interpretation of the Arabic word *millat*. The geographical nation

of today is a creation of the nineteenth century which was unknown before. It is doubtful if *millat* can be equated with nation as the latter is understood today. The people living within the geographical boundaries of a country, no matter what religion they subscribe to, are all equal members of a single nation because their economic, social and political problems are bound to be the same and the means to achieve them are also the same. Their objective being the same, they have to pull together to attain their goal. If one were to take religious faith as the basis for nationhood, people of different denominations living in one country would never be able to unite, and consequently will have no common objective.

The book under review is a very commendable study in understanding the basic thought of Iqbal. The author has a lucid style, and his knowledge of the *Qur'ān* is also fairly good, without which it is almost impossible to understand Iqbal.

MALIK RAM

New Delhi

Bashir Ahmad Dar, ed : *Anwār-i Iqbal*, with a foreword by Mumtaz Hasan, 348 pp. Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967. Rs. 12.00.

Everything from Iqbal's pen has a value, and Mr Bashir Ahmad Dar deserves our warmest commendations for making available to us in book form some of those scattered prose and verse compositions of the great poet which had remained beyond the reach of scholars for years. The editor has patiently and carefully collected this material from many magazines and journals which originally published these articles and verses of Iqbal. Besides, he has tapped private sources also and a number of letters of great value have been acquired by him. As early as March 29, 1919 Iqbal had written to Hājji Muḥammad Aḥmad Khān of Sitapur: "The literary and private letters of a poet throw light even on the compositions of that poet. The publication of letters of great poets is valuable from the literary point of view." (p. 11). Mr Dar's collection of Iqbal's letters and miscellaneous writings shows that apart from being helpful in an understanding of Iqbal's literary ideals and interests, it is invaluable for a closer study of the development of his thought and personality.

The first part of the collection (pp 1-49) gives Iqbal's comments and reviews on books, journals etc. Iqbal considered Munshi Prem Chand's *Prem pachisi*, a very valuable addition to Urdu literature (p. 2) and was a 'lover' of Khwājah Ḥasan Nizāmī's style (p. 4). He was thrilled when he read the following verse in Thāqib's *diwān* published in 1930 (p. 5) :

جان دیتا ہوں قلمس میں دونوں پر کھوئے ہوئے  
حسرت پرواز میں بھی شان ہے پرواز کی

This collection brings to light many important early literary attempts of Iqbal. It appears that for some time Iqbal was interested in writing books for school-children. In 1913, he wrote *Ta'rikh-i Hind* in collaboration with Lala Ram Prasad and published it through Munshi Gulab Chand. In 1925 he compiled

## BOOK REVIEWS

some Urdu text-books for the boys of VI, VII and VIII standards, in collaboration with Hakīm Aḥmad Shujā', and published them through Gulab Chand Kapoor and Sons of Lahore. In 1927 he brought out a selection of Persian Prose and Poetry under the title *Ā'ina-i 'ajam*. One wishes the editor had discussed the circumstances that compelled Iqbāl to do this sort of work which has neither originality nor depth.

In 1906 Iqbāl wrote from Cambridge to the editor of *Zamānah*, in reply to his queries, regarding the Swadeshi Movement (p. 26 *et seq.*).

The second section of the book, which gives Iqbāl's letters written to various persons drawn from different backgrounds, covers the bulk of this collection. Some very interesting proceedings of meetings in which Iqbāl participated are also included and Iqbāl's press interviews about Simon Commission and the Ittihad Conference are also appended to it. In April 1911 the Punjab Provincial Educational Conference held its meeting at Lahore and Iqbāl acted as its Secretary. He drafted its proceedings which are given in this collection.

Some early poetic compositions of Iqbāl are also brought to light in *Anwar-i Iqbāl* (p. 301 *et seq.*). The editor could lay his hand on some interesting letters Iqbāl addressed to Maulānā Akbar Shāh Khān Najībābādī and Muḥammad Idrīs. He writes in one of these letters :

آپ نے تھیک فرمایا ہے پیشور مولویوں کا اثر سر سید احمد خاں کی تحریک سے بہت کم ہو گیا تھا مگر خلافت کمیٹی نے اپنے پولیٹیکل فتنوں کی خاطر ان کا اقتدار ہندی مسلمانوں میں پھر قائم کر دیا یہ ایک بہت بڑی غلطی تھی جس کا احساس ابھی تک غالباً کسی کو نہیں ہوا (p. 317)

The book has been excellently brought out and should be on the bookshelf of every scholar and student of Iqbāl's life and thought.

K.A. NIZAMI

*Aligarh*

**Khawajah Abdul Hameed Irfani:** *Iqbāl Iranion ki nazar men*, 377 pp. Karachi: Iqbāl Academy, 1957. Rs. 10.50.

Iqbāl had started writing in Urdu, but from the very beginning he realized that to confine himself to that language would inevitably result in the shrinkage of his audience. Consequently, to widen the circle of his readers and to convey his message to people outside India, he simultaneously began writing in Persian as well which was the language of the two adjoining Muslim countries—Afghanistan and Iran. Without trying to minimize the importance of what he wrote in Urdu, it can be safely said that his principal message was imparted through Persian. His two famous *mathnawīs*—*Asrār* and *Rumūz*—, *Zabūr-i 'ajam* and *Jāvid-nāmāh* are all in Persian. No wonder that he has been equally popular in Iran where he was received with high esteem and approbation by men of learning and knowledge.

Dr Khwājah Abdul Hameed Irfani, who was for a number of years Pakistan's Cultural Attache attached to his country's Mission in Tehran, has collected in



this impressive volume translations of the opinions expressed by various Iranian scholars and men of letters about Iqbāl. Some of these consist of a few lines and others are full-length articles dealing with one aspect or the other of the thought of Iqbāl. It makes a very interesting reading, as it shows the evaluation of Iqbāl and his place in the cultural and intellectual history of Iran and the Urdu-knowing world.

MALIK RAM

New Delhi

K.A. Waheed : *A Bibliography of Iqbāl*, 224 pp. Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1965.

This is the first comprehensive bibliography of Muḥammad Iqbāl to appear in English. It is divided into five parts, the first part dealing with works of reference, the second with Iqbāl's works, the third with the translations and commentaries on Iqbāl's works, the fourth with books and pamphlets on Iqbāl, the fifth with books containing material about Iqbāl, and the last with the articles and poems on Iqbāl. Each part has been divided language-wise, e.g., the entries in the third part are grouped together under (a) Pakistani Languages (Urdu, Sindhi, Baluchi, Pashtu, Gujarati, Bengali), (b) Middle Eastern Languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) and (c) European Languages (English, French, German, Italian). Entries in the second part have been arranged both according to the nature of Iqbāl's writings, e.g., books, articles, forewords, letters, and according to language. This arrangement enables one to locate the material one needs quickly.

Mr Waheed has, no doubt, taken great pains to gather material, but though his English and Urdu entries seem exhaustive (except for the glaring and inexplicable omission of Annemarie Schimmel's *Gabriel's Wing* published over a year earlier than the bibliography and still the best study of Iqbāl in a European language), those in European languages are, unfortunately, not. Thus one finds the translation by Meyerovitch and Mohammad Mokri *Le Livre de l'Eternité* missing from the entries in French and Schimmel's *Einige Bemerkungen zu Muhammad Iqbāl's Gavidname* missing from the entries in German. Then, there is no mention of Jan Marek's Czech translation of selected poems of Iqbāl, *Poselství z východu*, or the Dutch work *De Roep van de Karavan, Mohammad Iqbāl, Dichter van Pakistan*, or Anikeev's *Obschestvenno-politicheskie vzglydy M. Iqbala* in Russian—all published over two years before the appearance of *A Bibliography of Iqbāl*.

The transliteration of certain Arabic words is inaccurate. One finds *ghazliyat* (p. 4) instead of *ghazaliyāt*; *gharrah* (p. 6) instead of *ghurra*; *jazabat* (pp 4, 8, et seq.) instead of *jadhbāt*; *tabasirah* (p. 83) instead of *tabšira*; *zival* (p. 6) instead of *zawāl*. Some German words have been misspelt or omitted. Thus one finds *awf* (p. 223) instead of *auf*, *Ewi* (p. 31) instead of *Ewigkeit* and *indomuslimische* (p. 224) without the noun *Modernismus*. In a few entries information given is not correct, e.g., Idarah Anis-i Urdu is not in Lucknow (p. 34) but in Allahabad. One hopes the Iqbāl Academy would rectify these mistakes in a future edition of *A Bibliography of Iqbāl* which continues to be the best guide to any study of the poet.

S. A. ALI

New Delhi

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I, S. A. Ali, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

S. A. Ali

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